



# Iran starts wargames in Gulf

DUBAI (R) — Iran's supreme leader arrived in the Gulf port of Bandar Abbas on the strategic Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday to watch the start of amphibious wargames by 200,000 troops, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

It said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is commander-in-chief of Iran's half-million-strong armed forces, arrived in the city to a warm welcome from local officials and people.

Chanted slogans in support of the supreme leader echoed in the Qods Mosque on his arrival, the agency said in a report from Bandar

Abbas. City streets were decorated with banners, posters of the Islamic republic's founder the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian flag and coloured lights, it said.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards were to begin three days of exercises in the Gulf on Tuesday evening to train for surprise attacks, IRNA said.

IRNA quoted the Guards' Deputy Commander Brigadier General Rahim Safavi as saying 200,000 troops would take part in the exercises codenamed "Tariq Al Quds" (Road to Jerusalem) covering four provinces.

The troops, including volunteer Basij forces, would test surface-to-air, shore-to-sea and surface-to-surface missiles during the three-day games. Gen. Safavi said Revolutionary Guard experts had the technical know-how to build various missiles.

Iran said last week its army would hold amphibious exercises in the Gulf to train for surprise attacks against "enemies" posing threats to the Islamic republic.

IRNA quoted Gen. Safavi as saying Iran, which holds wargames in the Gulf regularly, wanted "to upgrade the quality of its personnel so that it can better defend

Islamic ideals and safeguard territorial integrity."

He stressed that security in the Gulf was a collective responsibility "of all regional countries and as such Iran is holding the Tariq-Al Quds manoeuvres as a step to demonstrate its prowess for guaranteeing Persian Gulf security."

He said his country would not allow any "alien power to destabilise regional security."

Gen. Safavi said the departure of "intruding forces" — a term often used in Iran to describe U.S. armed forces in the Gulf — would help enhance cooperation among regional states.

# PNA police arrest 25 Palestinian teachers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — At least 25 Palestinian teachers were arrested by Palestinian National Authority (PNA) police on Monday for refusing to end a strike which has paralysed public sector schools in the West Bank, teachers and relatives said.

The teachers, from various West Bank cities, began their strike at the start of April demanding higher pay in the first labour dispute involving PNA employees.

"Twenty-five teachers or more have been arrested by the Palestinian police today and tonight," a teacher who did not want to be identified told Reuters.

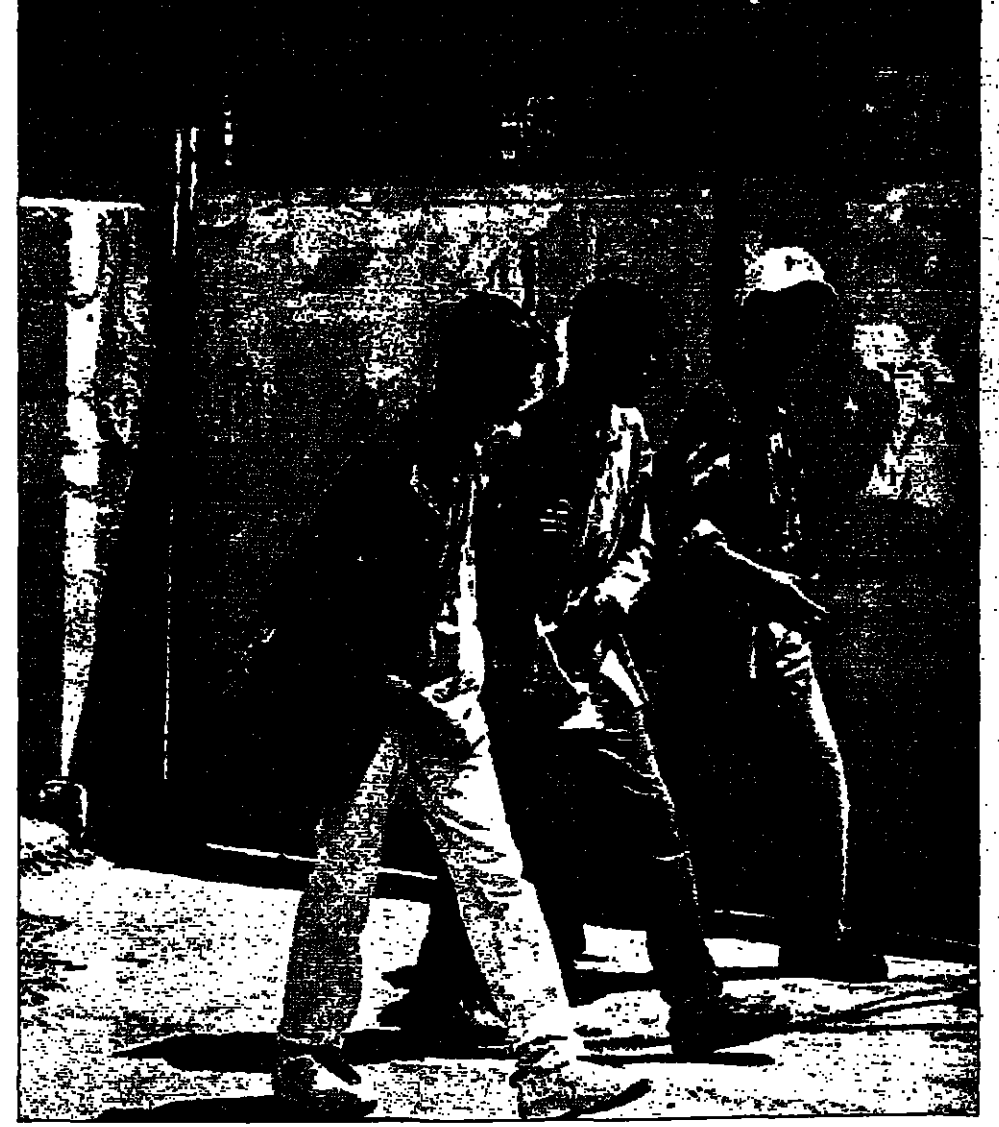
Relatives said Palestinian police in civilian clothes arrested the teachers from their homes.

Teachers said the arrests came after a stormy meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and teachers' representatives in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Sunday during which teachers refused to end the strike after their demands were rejected.

But PNA officials said teachers had promised Mr. Arafat to end their strike on Monday and the arrests came after teachers were seen on Monday forcing students to leave their classes.

"We are astonished at the continuation of the strike after they agreed in a meeting with President Arafat to end the strike," Tayeb Abdul Rahim, general secretary of the Palestinian presidency, told Palestine Television.

"We consider this an incitement against the Palestinian legitimate institutions and a deliberate attempt to create



Three Palestinian students walk past the gate of their closed school on Tuesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Palestinian teachers on the West Bank vowed to pursue an unprecedented strike against President Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority despite the arrest of 25 of their leaders (AFP photo)

chaos," he said.

The PNA issued a statement broadcast by Voice of Palestine on Monday appealing to teachers and students "to immediately return to schools."

"We call on all teachers and students to understand that the homeland and the Palestinian National Authority are passing through difficult political and economic hardships," the statement said.

Up to 18,000 teachers have been on strike. About 20,000 school teachers are on the PNA's payroll in the West Bank.

"The PNA took charge of most of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank under a 1993 self-rule deal with Israel. The authority provides free education to

Palestinians until high school.

Teachers say that average monthly pay is about \$400, barely enough to cover basic expenses. Education Minister Yasser Amr told Voice of Palestine Radio earlier in the month that the ministry had offered pay rises of up to 15 per cent despite budget constraints.

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# Peruvian soldiers storm residence killing all 14 rebels

(Continued from page 1)

comrades. Mr. Fujimori flatly refused.

Mr. Tudela and Mr. Aoki were in a military hospital, officials said.

Several hostages were whisked to the military hospital and a police clinic in at least six ambulances.

Officials said soldiers were seen being taken out on stretchers but only two are reported dead.

The crackdown, which came after Mr. Fujimori arranged for the hostage-holders to travel abroad for asylum in Cuba or the Dominican Republic, came weeks after rebels rejected that offer and continued to dig in their heels. Japan had pressured for a peaceful resolution to the standoff which started when the rebels stormed the mansion at a December 17 gala cocktail party. But the raid could not have come without a green light from Tokyo, most experts agreed, as the siege went

on for months inside Japan's diplomatic compound. However, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said Wednesday that Peru's government failed to inform Japan that it would raid the residence of its embassy and free the hostages.

"Our country was not

this is very regrettable," Mr. Hashimoto said in a speech hours after the attack. "I would like to offer my appreciation from the bottom of my heart to President Fujimori and Peruvian government officials for their timely, great rescue operations," he told a hurriedly arranged media conference.

Japan is Peru's number-one foreign aid source, having given more than \$750 million in grants and loans in the past five years. Tokyo pledged another \$600 million in development assistance in August.

The United States

blamed the hostage-takers Tuesday for what it said were "some casualties" suffered.

"It is clear there have been some casualties," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, adding that the leftists rebels must bear "full and complete responsibility."

He said the United States deeply regrets the casualties, which he said once again demonstrate the high price of terrorism.

He also pointed out that the Peruvian government had tried to end the crisis peacefully.

U.S. Secretary of State William Cohen said in an interview with CNN Wednesday that the U.S. had no official word the event will take place but it did not take them by surprise because "there were signs and indications the event will take place." When asked by a CNN reporter if the U.S. had any role in the operation, he answered: "We have

offered our services to the Peruvian government but this was the action of the Peruvian government alone."

He refused to describe the services they had offered. He added: "The world stands in condemnation of terrorist actions. This proves that terrorism does not pay and if there are legitimate demands, they need to be addressed in a peaceful fashion."

Mr. Fujimori, the only ethnic Japanese head of government outside Japan, won support from Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto after they met on the crisis in Toronto in January. Mr. Fujimori for months sought a negotiated settlement but in the end stayed true to his hard-fought rebel-busting image. Even though he had said that his troops would never storm the building unless a hostage was hurt, it is not yet known if the guerrilla fighters had given him such reason to act.

# Court sentences Abu Khajil to 14 years

(Continued from page 1)

abuse of trust and forgery of a government seal.

The ex-consul was declared guilty by presiding Judge Issam Abu Ghneim and Judge Mohammad Ghreir of three charges. The charges were selling one child and attempting to sell another, possessing illegal wireless devices, forgery and use of forged documents.

"The accused confessed to selling one child in 1995, and the prosecution was able to prove another attempted baby sale in March of 1996," the judge said.

In its one-hour ruling, the court found Mr. Abu Khajil guilty of endorsing a forged document whereby Ms. Laji provided a false name for the father of the

child saying he was in Sri Lanka and secured a birth certificate which in turn was endorsed by the consulate to make it authentic.

Following that the document was forged, Mr. Abu Khajil handed it over to the Dutch couple as an official paper," the court maintained.

The court also stated that Mr. Abu Khajil illegally owned wireless scanners and a walkie-talkie.

"The bearer of such devices should obtain a special permission which Mr. Abu Khajil did not have," Judge Abu Ghneim told a packed court room.

The court acquitted Mr. Abu Khajil of the additional seven counts.

"The prosecution failed to present sufficient evidence in any of these charges, and in some cases

the prosecution based its charges on assumptions rather than providing solid evidence," Judge Abu Ghneim said.

Prosecutor Ma'moun Mneizel had asked the court for the maximum penalty.

Mr. Abu Khajil, who served almost 13 months in jail, was released twice in January of 1997, when he was released for 10 days on a JD100,000 bail, and the second time was on April 10 when he was released on a JD 20,000 bail.

Mr. Abu Khajil is also being tried at the Criminal Court on charges of raping four Sri Lankan women.

However, the four women changed their initial statements made to the prosecutor and now are facing perjury charges.

# Arafat in Jordan today

(Continued from page 1)

But a meeting between President Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Malta last week succeeded in breaking the ice between the two sides, although it failed to resume official talks.

Meanwhile, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayez Tarawneh said Jordan will intensify talks with Syria to bring relations between the two countries back to normal.

Dr. Tarawneh, who was speaking to reporters following the Cabinet session, added that his meeting with his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Sharaa, in Malta last week was "very positive" and the Kingdom expects more contacts between the two

neighbouring countries.

He told reporters that during his meeting with Mr. Sharaa, Jordan found willingness from the Syrian side to intensify contacts on all levels.

"We hope that these contacts will result in a new formula that would organise the relationship between the two sides... and God willing, high ranking meetings will take place soon," Mr. Tarawneh said without elaboration.

The Kingdom's relations with its northern neighbour soured following the October 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty which angered the Syrian leadership.

# Peru rebel says fight against "system of repression" will go on

(Continued from page 1)

martyrs for their marxist cause in a country in which half the population of 24 million live in poverty.

"We have been in contact permanently with the members of my party," Mr. Velazco said, adding that what they did was what they had said they would do: "that they would resist until the end."

"The present regime has taken criminal steps with this operation," he said. "There had been some apparent headway made in the negotiations," he added. "Mr. Alberto Fujimori had even spoken about this," Mr. Velazco said. "He had said that we were to await a peaceful decision."

"But the need to hide the

crimes of their death squadron ... led to a military raid to solve the crisis," the spokesman said, referring to a well-known case of the military having killed innocent civilians.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement MRTA is a small group of well-trained and well-indoctrinated rebels, according to analysts, and never achieved nor sought the grassroots, peasant support of its long-time rival, the Maoist Shining Path.

The MRTA — inspired by the teachings of Ernesto "Che" Guevara — emerged in the 1980s with a vow to overthrow the government and create a communist state.

The group, founded by Victor Polay Campos, took its name from Jose Gabriel

Condorcanqui Tupac Amaru — a direct descendant of the last Inca leader Tupac Amaru — who led an Indian uprising against the Spanish crown in the late 18th century.

The MRTA has been a thorn in the flesh of the Peruvian government for more than a decade, carrying out some 500 major armed attacks since 1984 and engaging in some 120 military clashes with the government.

Independent sources attribute more 1,000 deaths to the organisation since 1984. But the MRTA was always overshadowed by the Shining Path which was responsible for more than 97 per cent of all armed attacks and 97 per cent of deaths in the same period.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Adventures of the Rainbow Pond  
14:30 ..... Flintstones  
15:00 ..... French Programmes  
16:00 ..... America's Funniest People  
16:25 ..... Spell Binder  
16:50 ..... Doc. — Challenge  
17:15 ..... Border Town  
18:00 ..... French Programmes  
19:30 ..... News Headlines  
19:35 ..... Comedy — Grace Under Fire  
20:00 ..... Children's Diary  
20:30 ..... Challenges  
21:10 Drama — Spencer for Hire  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:25 ..... Cobra  
23:00 ..... Hart to Hart

## PRAYER TIMES

04:31 ..... Fajr  
05:54 ..... (Sunrise/Duha  
12:34 ..... Dhuhr  
16:12 ..... Asr  
19:14 ..... Maghreb  
20:37 ..... Isha

## CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 632826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

## WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Hot, dry, and dusty weather conditions will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds southerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman ..... 16/33  
Aqaba ..... 20/39  
Deserts ..... 14/34

Jordan Valley ..... 18/35

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 31, Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 21 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Faysal Al Dabbas ..... 759155

Dr. Adnan Zaghloul ..... 898140

Dr. Fakher Bilest ..... 552233

Dr. Mazen Nball ..... 675485

Firas pharmacy ..... 661912

Ferdows pharmacy ..... 890280

Al Asema pharmacy ..... 637055

Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Naironkh pharmacy ..... 623672

Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh ..... 250080

Al Quds pharmacy ..... (—)

## EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,

637777

Fire Brigade ..... 617101

Blood Bank ..... 775121

Highway Police ..... 843402

Traffic Police ..... 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints ..... 605800

Price Complaints ..... 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints ..... 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121

Overseas Calls ..... 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television ..... 773111

Radio Jordan ..... 774111

Water Authority ..... 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

## HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Busseln Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman ..... 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir, ..... 775111/26

Army, Marka ..... 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50

Amal Hospital ..... 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 865199

## ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

## IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

## ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)

08:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)

08:35 ..... Larnaca (RJ)

09:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)



# Home News

## Crown Prince m

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday met with Dr. Mane' Said Oteiba, private advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Dr. Oteiba conveyed Sheikh Zayed's greetings to both His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan and affirmed the President wished the King continued good health.

In the meeting at the Royal Court, Prince Hassan emphasised the importance of maintaining contacts between Arab countries, especially in the Gulf region.

He stressed the importance of maintaining close relations with the West, through maintaining contact with cultural and cultural institutions, in order to reflect Islamic humanitarian concepts and highlight its tolerance as well as the introduction of Arab culture and values.

Regarding recent tensions in Jerusalem, Prince Hassan emphasised the need to differentiate between housing — a legitimate need for Palestinians and Israelis alike — and the settlement activity, which he maintained represents an Israeli political goal at the expense of legitimate Palestinian rights.

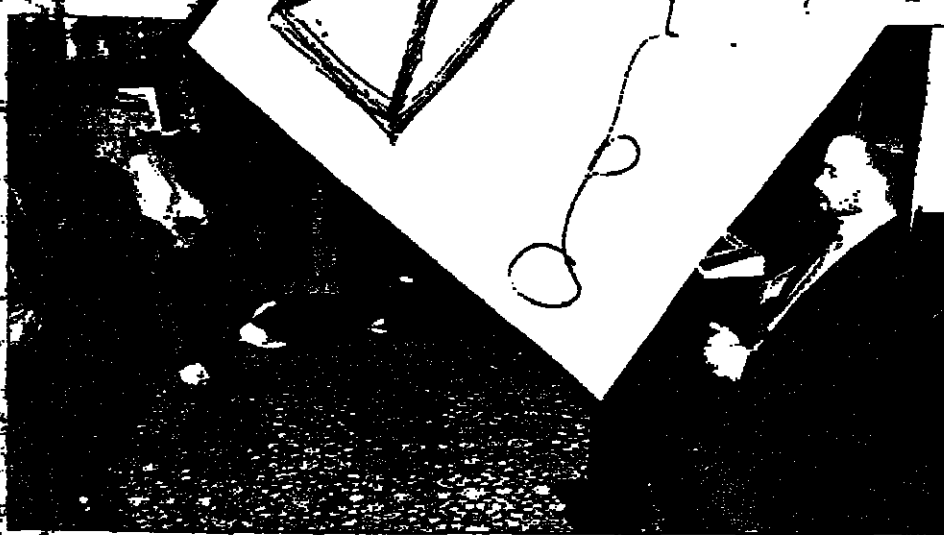
Dr. Oteiba praised existing cooperation between Jordan and the UAE, describing it as a model to be emulated by other Arab countries.

The meeting was attended by King Hussein's Cultural Adviser HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, UAE Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Ali Nasser and Director of Prince Hassan's office Michel Hamaneh (photo by Boghos).

HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday meets with Mane' Said Oteiba, private advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan. Also present are King Hussein's Cultural Adviser HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, UAE Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Ali Nasser and Director of Prince Hassan's office Michel Hamaneh (photo by Boghos).

AMMAN (AP) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Fayyad Tuesday met with officials of the Palestinian government Hamas, about the possible extradition of their leader, Yasser Arafat, from the West Bank.

Khaled Mahabeh, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, said talks centered on Mr. Arafat's extradition, legal situation following an Israeli decision to cancel an extradition request for the Hamas leader.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday meets with Mane' Said Oteiba, private advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan. Also present are King Hussein's Cultural Adviser HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, UAE Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Ali Nasser and Director of Prince Hassan's office Michel Hamaneh (photo by Boghos).

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Khaled Mahabeh, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, said talks centered on Mr. Arafat's extradition, legal situation following an Israeli decision to cancel an extradition request for the Hamas leader.

There are negotiations to find a legal outlet from the U.S. Immigration law against Mr. Abu Marzouk and his extradition to the Arab country where we hope will be Jordan, Mr. Mahabeh said.

He declined to discuss other Hamas representatives and government officials refused comment.

Last Monday, U.S. District Judge Denise Co. refused to release Mr. Abu Marzouk, saying Israel's decision to suspend extradition proceedings meant he should remain in the custody of immigration authorities.

In 1995, Israel asked for Mr. Abu Marzouk's extradition as a suspect in 1987-1994 which killed 47 people.

Israel, recently, dropped the request, stating it would increase regional tension.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has resolved to promptly offer medium-term loans to farmers whose harvests were considered badly damaged by earlier frost and who intend to plant new crops during the current season, according to Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Ab Ra'i quoted Nimer Nabulsi, head of the Jordanian Agricultural Credit Corporation, as confirming that the government has also approved rescheduling those farmers' debts which are due in 1997 if they so request and if their crops were damaged by the past winter season's frost.

## Zarqa fire attributed to incautious welding

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fire officials Tuesday attributed the cause of a fire in Zarqa late Monday night, with flames apparently reaching a height of 10 metres and engulfing a clothes market, to a spark from a welding instrument.

"Negligence on the part of an employee, who did not follow safety procedures and was welding his booth near flammable material, sparked the blaze," Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said.

They confirmed there were no casualties in the fire, which started at approximately 9:30 p.m. and destroyed almost 250 street stalls and several cars parked near the five-dunum market.

"Fortunately, all shops were closed at the time of the incident," Captain Farid Share' of the Preventive Awareness Department at the CDD said.

He added that although the fire spread rapidly to neighbouring stalls, it was brought under control in an hour.

More than 20 fire engines participated in fighting the blaze and preventing its spread to a nearby camp, Capt. Share' told the Jordan Times, adding that the Armed Forces and the Public Security Department (PSD) also took part in the rescue operation.

Three CDD fire-fighters injured while battling the fire, were listed in good condition, he added.

Capt. Share' could not estimate financial losses, but shop owners Monday stated that these reached millions of dinars.

Also Monday evening, fire fighters in Irbid battled a fire in a pesticides factory in Al Hassan Industrial City, according to CDD officials.

No one was injured in the accident, which occurred in the Arab Company for Manufacturing Pesticides Capt. Share' maintained.

Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the blaze he added.

In other accidents in the Kingdom, PSD officials affirmed that a 24-year old man was killed Tuesday in the Abu Nuseir neighbourhood of Amman as a result of 'festive fire'.

The victim, identified only as Ahmad A., was attending a wedding, "when one of his friends began to fire a gun in celebration [of the event] and a bullet struck Ahmad," they said.

A PSD official confirmed that the department apprehended a 31-year old man, identified as J. K. in connection with the incident.

The suspect might be charged with accidental shooting, he said.

"Celebratory shooting is forbidden by law, but still we see individuals violating the law and shooting live ammunition to rejoice over weddings," the official said.

PSD statistics for 1996 reported that celebratory shooting ranked second in the category of accidental shootings with 13.04 per cent of the 23 cases of that year.

Meanwhile, in the Badia area, a 43-year old man was killed after a trailer struck him on the Hazeem Highway, a PSD official said.

According to the official, the victim, identified only as Mohammad A., was assisting a driver of another trailer whose vehicle had broken down.

Mohammad tied a rope to the broken trailer and was pulling it to help restart the vehicle, he said.

When it did start, he descended from his truck and untied the rope, the official added.

"The victim neglected to engage the emergency brake, and the trailer rolled down striking him," the PSD official said.

## Retailers rejoice over produce price floating

By Ghaila Alul  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While retailers welcomed the floating of fruit prices and vegetables, consumers are complaining that the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Supply's move has led to a considerable price increase.

The ministry decision to remove the price ceiling follows years of debate and forms part of the government's efforts to liberalise the economy.

Retailers appeared happy with the decision, stating that it would put an end to monopoly.

"The decision is very good both for us and the consumers," retailer Basel Zu'bi said.

However, some consumers regretted the decision, accusing retailers of manipulation and profiteering.

They described the floating of prices as detrimental to consumer interests especially those who regard fruits and vegetables as some of the least expensive foodstuffs.

"Yesterday, I bought one kilogram of lemons for 70 piastres," one consumer asserted. "Before the prices were floated, I bought the same amount for 40 piastres."

However, retailer Ziad Qaissi argued that the decision would grant consumers the right to choose fruits and vegetables according to quality.

"Now retailers can sell lesser-quality fruits and vegetables at lower prices, while the better produce can be sold at higher prices," Mr. Qaissi maintained.

He told the Jordan Times his prices have remained unchanged since the decision and that he will fix his prices later in accordance with prices of other green-grocers.

"The floating of the prices will guarantee competition among retailers," he added.

The ministry, which used to publish a daily bulletin fixing the prices of fruits and vegetables, has now stopped this practice leaving the market prices to be fixed according to the forces of supply and demand.

According to Al Ra'i Arabic daily, the ministry will still publish a non-binding daily bulletin listing the lowest and highest prices of produce in the central wholesale market.

The newspaper quoted a ministry source as saying that the ministry will still fine merchants who fail to put price tags on their products. He said the fine would reach JD 300.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has resolved to promptly offer medium-term loans to farmers whose harvests were considered badly damaged by earlier frost and who intend to plant new crops during the current season, according to Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Ab Ra'i quoted Nimer Nabulsi, head of the Jordanian Agricultural Credit Corporation, as confirming that the government has also approved rescheduling those farmers' debts which are due in 1997 if they so request and if their crops were damaged by the past winter season's frost.

Mr. Nabulsi maintained the corporation's 20 national offices have already begun receiving applications for loans from farmers including those in the Jordan Valley.

He affirmed that corporation teams would be visiting the affected farm lands in order to estimate the extent of the damage.

Jordan Television Monday interviewed a number of farmers in the Jordan Valley who lamented that produce damage was overwhelming in some areas.

Mr. Nabulsi requested that farmers promptly send in their loan applications as the corporation office will continue receiving them for the next two weeks after which processing will begin.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Tuesday returned to Amman after a tour of the Arab Gulf countries where it examined those market needs of Jordanian agricultural products.

The AMO representatives also discussed competition to Jordanian agricultural exports to the Gulf.

The delegation toured Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Bahrain where it collected data regarding produce sales and studied obstacles facing the marketing of Jordanian produce in the Gulf.

In January, the AMO announced that last year Jordan exported 355,900 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables worth an estimated JD 72.2 million.

Sales figures demonstrated an increase of 24.1 per cent over 1995 exports, the marketing organisation said, with vegetables accounting for nearly 81 per cent of the total exports.

The United Arab Emirates topped the list of importing countries.

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## Weekly tabloid, reporter, and former RCC director charged with slander

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman Prosecutor Jamal Zou'bi has referred the case of a writer, a weekly tabloid newspaper and one of its reporters to the Amman Court of First Instance on charges of slandering Deputy Samir Habashneh, a judicial source said.

Deputy Habashneh filed a lawsuit against Al Hadath Newspaper, journalist Nidal Mansour and Iyad Qattan, a writer and former director of the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), on charges of publishing false news items which he claims tarnished his image and dignity.

He is reportedly seeking JD 1 million in compensation, the judicial source said.

According to the source, the court is expected to start hearing the case in the next few days.

In its Jan. 27 issue, the newspaper published a letter sent by Mr. Qattan accusing Deputy Habashneh, who also previously served as minister of culture, of "false pretentious nationalism" and abusing his position.

In his letter, Mr. Qattan alleged that Mr. Habashneh had only served eight of the 380 days of his tenure as minister of culture actually executing cultural work, and that he spent his remaining days receiving members of various tribes

and aiding in the appointment of their relatives in various government posts.

Mr. Qattan also maintained that the former minister fired him from his job as RCC director without justification and that Mr. Habashneh's actions stemmed from "my refusal to appoint one of his unqualified relatives in a position at the RCC."

He further charged that during Mr. Habashneh's one year and two month post as minister of culture he visited the centre twice.

Mr. Qattan also alleged that the former minister spent JD 31,000 on parties skating in the interview: "We do not know if this public money was really used for official ceremonies

or [if it was used] for parties."

He further accused the minister of receiving £30,000 to participate in a three-month English training course "when, in fact, the actual cost of the course was only £5,000."

In his letter, Mr. Qattan challenged Mr. Habashneh to disprove the veracity of any of these allegations.

Attorney Samih Habashneh, who is the deputy's brother, told the Jordan Times in January that Mr. Qattan's allegations were incorrect and that he submitted evidence to the court in support of the deputy's professionalism.

## Jemstone launches interactive web-site

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman-based Jemstone Network, the largest med-journal project of the European Union (EU), officially launched its interactive web-site here Tuesday, according to a press release issued by the Amman-based Med-Media Regional Office.

The Jemstone Interactive Web-Site, designed and created by Ambia.OnLine, provides detailed information about the Jemstone Network, its plans and activities.

It is also involved in the creation of an Internet forum for journalists throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region.

To evaluate the programme, Med-Media held a three-day workshop involving 35 leading journalists who gathered in Amman to assess the programme's activities and future plans, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Addressing the opening session, Jemstone Director Tudor Lomas explained that the launch of an Internet forum for journalists throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region

was first announced at the Fourth Annual Conference of Radio and Television Organisations and Operators, held in Marseilles in January 1997.

"This is about freedom of speech and better quality journalism," he said. "Technology now prevents political censors from impeding diligent journalists from becoming informed and enlightening their colleagues."

"We are trying to strengthen and simplify this process for all media branches throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region," he added.

The idea of the Jemstone forum, as it is known, was the brainchild of Hussein Amin of the Adham Centre for Television Journalism at the American University of Cairo, according to the press release.

The project aims to provide a forum for professional journalists to discuss pressing issues and exchange information and advice on technical and journalistic issues.

The forum will be open to all journalists from the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

## Joint Jordan-U.S. military commission to meet today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian-U.S. joint military commission today opens a two-day meeting to discuss future joint exercises, U.S. security assistance to Jordan and other issues of common concern.

A press release from the U.S. embassy reported that the delegation, which arrived in Amman Monday evening, is headed by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Affairs Fred Smith.

The delegation, grouping representatives of the U.S. Defence and State Departments, will participate in the joint meeting, according to the press release.

Mr. Smith Tuesday met with Chairman of the Jordanian Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirzi Kaabneh, who will lead the Jordanian delegation to the commission in order to discuss military cooperation.

The commission alternates the site of its annual meetings between Jordan and the United States in promoting cooperation between both countries armed forces, according to the press release.

Last February, Jordan received an American C-130 H transport plane as military assistance from the United States and announced that the two countries will maintain military exercises as part of U.S. efforts to upgrade the Kingdom's defence capabilities.

Jordan is also due to receive 16 F-16 fighter jets from the United States before the end of 1997 after President Clinton granted Jordan the status of a non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ally, thus entitling the Kingdom to advanced military equipment.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### EXHIBITIONS

- First Amman International Exhibition of Children's Books" at the International Exhibition Centre, University Road, (Tel. 659891/2), until April 28.
- Egg hunt at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Huda Foundation, off Wadi Sagra (Tel. 699141/2), until April 28.
- Works by Lebanese plastic artists at Hamourabi Arts Gallery, Garbus Street (Tel. 5536098), until April 24.
- Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Donatelli Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jebel Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.

### THEATRE

- "EU-Jordan Business Agreement" by the Jordanian Businessmen Association, at the Jordanian Businessmen Association, Amman (Tel. 669855/644244) at 5:00 p.m.



## Zaire premier says army can defend capital against rebels

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo has called on residents of Kinshasa to denounce all suspect people, saying the army can defend the city against rebels but needs public support.

In a television interview late Monday, General Likulia declared that the Zairean Armed Forces, the FAZ, was able to hold the city against rebels who have swept across the eastern half of the country, but needed "the support of the people."

He claimed that inhabitants of all the towns conquered by Laurent Kabila's guerrillas since October were putting up "strong resistance to the rebels," but denounced wide divisions among Zairean politicians which had weakened the strength of the armed forces.

Gen. Likulia also renewed Zairean charges that "certain neighbouring countries" had sent regular troops to fight for the mainly Tutsi rebel alliance, claiming that Mr. Kabila was dependent on help from these forces. Zaire has previously accused Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi of involvement, charges denied by all these countries.

On peace talks which have been under way in South Africa, Gen. Likulia said he was "confident" they would achieve a settlement.

"But if they collapse, the FAZ is ready to end a truce and resume fighting," he said.

Frequently, Zaire's rag-tag army has looted and fled towns ahead of rebel advances and Mr. Kabila's men now control more than half the country, including the mineral-rich southeastern provinces crucial to the economy.

Gen. Likulia said he would talk to the transitional parliament, the High Council of the Republic, on the situation in the country, where "the state coffers are empty," but for notes with a face value of between 100,000 and one million new Zaires.

180,000 new zaires are worth \$1, but the biggest note in circulation is the 50,000 new zaire bill, because Zaireans refuse to take other notes arguing that they will worsen inflation.

On Monday, the United States urged Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and Mr. Kabila to hold talks in South Africa, lamenting the difficulty in arranging the meeting.

It is "important for the rebels and the government to respond favourably to the South African proposal" for a summit, said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

Obstacles to holding the meeting were "quite disappointing, because we think the only way that any progress is going to be made in the current civil war in Zaire" is through such dialogue, Mr. Burns said.

Washington will give "all necessary support" to the efforts of the South African government and the U.N. special envoy Mohammad Sahnoun to arrange the direct talks.

he said.

The question was raised during a meeting early Monday between Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and South African Vice-President Thabo Mbeki.

Mr. Sahnoun said Monday that there is "still a small hope to concretise the meeting." He told AFP that both parties "continue to say they're ready" to meet.

Last Thursday, Mr. Sahnoun and South African Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad, peace mediators in the ongoing conflict, announced in Cape Town that the two foes had agreed to meet.

But on Saturday, Mr. Kabila toughened his position, saying he only would meet Mr. Mobutu to discuss the conditions for the president's departure, while the head of state refuses to stand down.

The rebels have seized all key cities apart from the capital Kinshasa and are seeking to oust Mr. Mobutu, ruler for the past 32 years.

Meanwhile, China Tuesday denied it had sent any troops to Zaire dismissing claims by a senior rebel leader that 400 Chinese soldiers had flown into Kinshasa to boost forces backing President Mobutu.

"This is a 100 per cent rumour," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai said.

"These rumours have no foundation and are designed only to damage relations between the Zairean and Chinese people," Mr. Cui added.

"China never sends its troops abroad," he said, adding "the People's Liberation Army does not have any mercenaries." Emphasising China's position of neutrality, he said Beijing would "continue to develop good relations with Zaire even if the government changes."

"Sino-African relations are based on confidence, mutual understanding and non-interference. That is our attitude to all African countries including Zaire," Mr. Cui said.

On Monday, rebel official Mwapanga Mwana Nanga claimed that 400 Chinese soldiers had arrived in the Zairean capital.

"We are not afraid of the Chinese, nor of anyone," he added, without saying whether the reported soldiers were mercenaries or Chinese government troops.

Zairean diplomats in Beijing also denied the claim.

"We have always enjoyed very close military cooperation with China," one diplomat said, adding that a brigade of government light infantry in Kisangani had been trained by China.

"But since the beginning (of civil war in the central African nation last year), China has chosen a position of neutrality," he said. "China has done nothing for either side, and no Chinese troops have arrived there," he added, speaking on condition of anonymity.



Zairean rebels leave one side of the Zaire River aboard a ferry to retrieve U.N. equipment abandoned on the other side of the river. U.N. operations at the refugee makeshift camps has been stopped by incidents of violence from the Zairean population. (Reuters photo)

## Armenia denies attacking Azerbaijan

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) —

Armenia's Defence Ministry Monday denied claims from rival Azerbaijan that Armenian tanks and artillery carried out major attacks in which dozens of people were killed and wounded.

Rejecting the claims, ministry spokesman Seiran Shakhosyan accused Azerbaijan of firing across the border over the weekend and seriously injuring three residents in the village of Paravakhar in northern Armenia. He also accused Azerbaijani troops of firing at an important highway along the border.

Azerbaijan Sunday accused Armenia of shelling Azerbaijani positions around the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and along the northern part of the border.

They claimed Armenian tanks tried to cross into Azerbaijan, but were repelled and that at least 50 people were killed or wounded in clashes that allegedly lasted all weekend.

Azerbaijani President Geidar Aliyev said Monday his country doesn't consider the attacks a violation of the two countries' 1994 ceasefire.

He met with Russia's special envoy to the two countries on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, and pledged that Azerbaijan would observe the terms of the current truce.

Armenian military spokesman Shakhosyan denied anyone was killed or injured in the clashes, except the three villagers.

But Mr. Aliyev said there were casualties on both sides, though he did not provide figures.

In the village of Verkhny Salakh, 450 kilometres from Baku, the Azerbaijani capital, one Azerbaijani family held a funeral Monday for Arif Kazimov, 30, killed in the weekend fighting.

The two former Soviet republics are locked in a bitter nine-year dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous enclave inside Azerbaijan populated by Armenians who drove out Azerbaijani troops and proclaimed independence.

A truce signed in 1994 ended the war that killed 15,000 people and turned about one million others into refugees, but peace talks have remained deadlocked. Armenian forces presently control most of the enclave and some land inside Azerbaijan.

The 1994 ceasefire has largely held, but sporadic clashes continue. Last week, the Armenian Defence Ministry said its troops killed seven Azerbaijani gunmen who tried to cross into Armenia.

## Afghanistan's Taleban reject criticism of its human rights

KABUL (AP) — The hard-

line Taleban government Monday rejected criticism of its strict Islamic policies leveled at a recent human rights conference in Geneva.

"The human rights envoys never visit any Taleban areas. They just collect information from our opposition zones which is wrong," Information Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told journalists in the war-shattered Afghan capital.

The Taleban has enforced a strict version of Islamic Law in the two-thirds of Afghanistan it controls, forbidding women from working, banning girls from school and forcing men to pray in mosques.

International human rights groups have assailed the Taleban's attitude towards women and its summary arrests of minority ethnic groups.

The Taleban is locked in a fierce battle with a northern-based coalition which espouses a more liberal view of Islam and which largely represents the country's ethnic minorities.

Most Taleban fighters belong to the country's majority Pashtun ethnic group. The coalition against the Taleban represents the ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, Shiites and Muslims and a small Ismaili sect of Islam.

Mr. Muttaqi said human rights workers were frightened off by Afghanistan's ongoing civil war, claiming many were too scared to even drive the bumpy roads leading into Kabul.

He called on human rights investigators to visit Taleban zones before making statements against its leadership.

Mr. Muttaqi also defended the Taleban's record on drugs.

Afghanistan now ranks second only to Burma as the world's largest producer of poppy, the raw material used to make opium and heroin, according to the United Nations drug control programme.

The Taleban has banned growing and smoking hashish, a drug popular among Afghans, but has not moved to limit poppy cultivation.

Foreign anti-narcotics officials say most of the poppy cultivated in Afghanistan is processed into heroin along the rugged Pakistan border and then smuggled to Europe and the United States.

Mr. Muttaqi said the Taleban lacked funds to combat the lucrative opium trade, but would take action if given international funding.

"The U.N. Should come talk to U.S. about this issue. We are ready to cooperate and coordinate our activity to fight the drug trade," he said.

Farmers in southern Helmand province used to cultivate more than 50,000 tonnes of cotton annually, Mr. Muttaqi said.

But years of civil war have destroyed irrigation systems and left thousands of hectares (acres) littered by land mines, reducing cotton output to a mere 2,000 tonnes (2,200 short tonnes) a year, he said.

"People cultivate opium because they need money," said Mr. Muttaqi. "But no one in Taleban zones can smoke opium or hashish."

Mr. Muttaqi also said the Taleban has sent a captured opposition commander to its southern seat of government in Kandahar, 550 kilometres southwest of Kabul, to face trial for sedition.

Mohammed Zaheer, who was captured by the Taleban last week during fighting in eastern Nangahar province, is the son of Haji Qadir, a powerful commander fighting the Taleban.

Mr. Qadir controlled Nangahar since the fall of Afghanistan's Communists in 1992 until he was overrun last September by the Taleban Islamic militia, which went on to capture Kabul.

The Taleban believe Mr. Qadir's forces are behind recent insurgencies in Nangahar and neighbouring Kunar province.

"But now there is no more danger to the Taleban in Nangahar," said Mr. Muttaqi.

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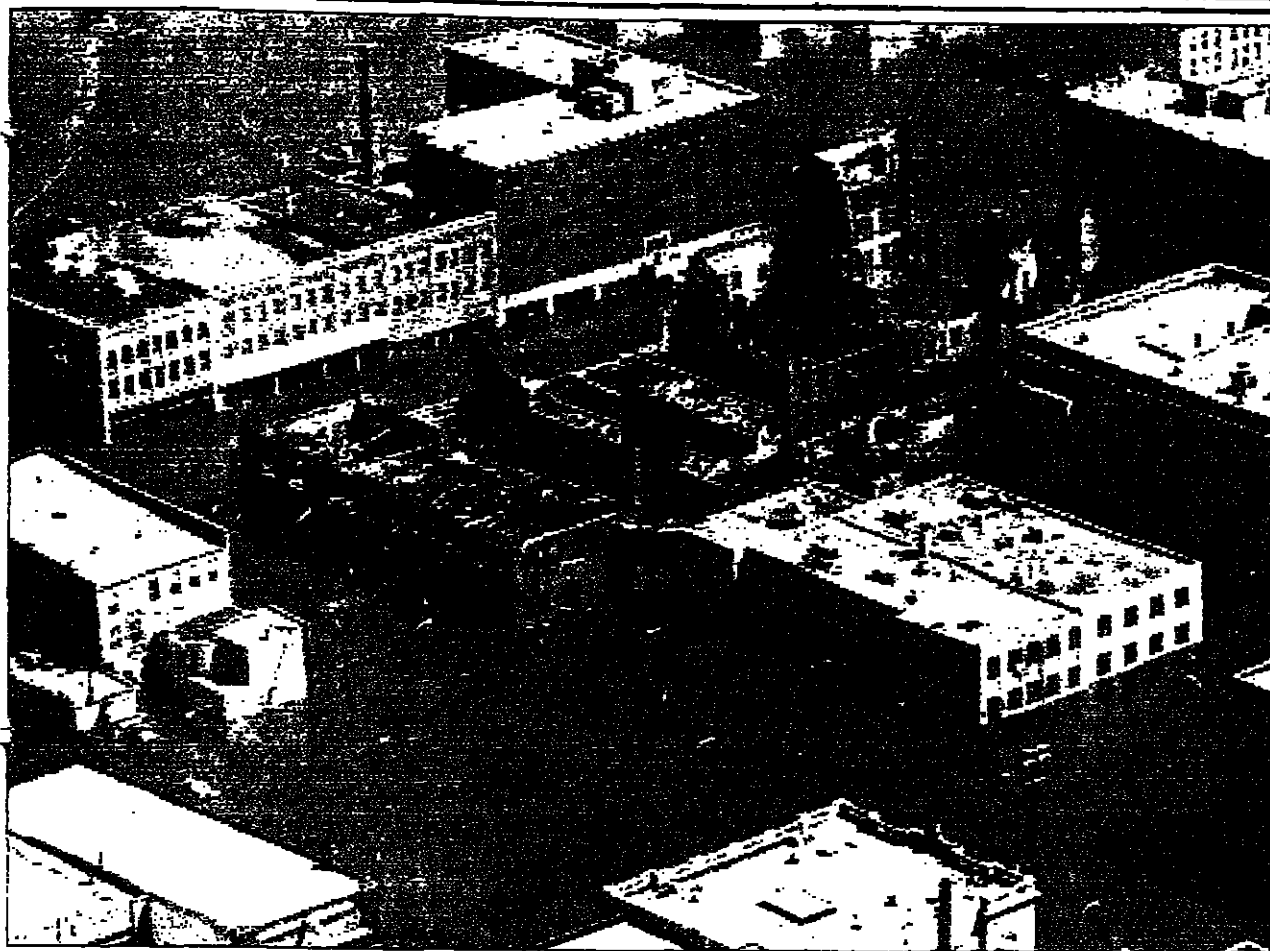
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An aerial view of burned out buildings surrounded by the flood waters of the Red River in downtown Grand Forks, North Dakota. The Red River has risen 25 feet above its flood level. At least 13 downtown buildings sustained fire damage when firefighters could not control a blaze due to the flood waters (Reuters photo)

## U.S. city staggers under flood, fire losses

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (R) — Boat patrols cruised the flooded streets of this devastated north Dakota city Monday searching for stragglers as cranes prepared to knock down buildings gutted by fire in the downtown district.

Roughly 90 per cent of Grand Forks was under water from the cresting Red River, which has flooded vast stretches of the northern U.S. plains for the past three weeks.

The White House announced President Bill Clinton would visit Tuesday, arriving at an air force base used as an emergency shelter for city residents.

"When he sees the disastrous condition we are in he will grant us assistance — much assistance," Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens told reporters at a daily news briefing.

Icy, murky floodwaters polluted with raw sewage stood as much as three metres deep in downtown streets, where gutted buildings stood gaping from the fierce weekend fire.

Across the Red River in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, houses were nearly submerged and some had floated loose from their foundations, the mayor of the town of 9,000 said.

"Many people left with only the shirt on their backs. No money, no possessions. We've told them to stay out of town for at least two weeks," Mayor Lynn Stauss said.

Officials worried that federal assistance of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per family would fail to meet the needs of many residents who have lost everything in what experts have called a once-in-500-year flood.

"I think we need to have money available for people to rebuild their houses. Grant money, not loans. The money available now is just not enough," said U.S. Representative Collin Peterson, Democrat of Minnesota.

The recovery effort cannot begin until the waters recede, and the river was expected to remain at its forecast crest at grand forks of 16.4 metres — 7.9 metres above flood stage — for several days.

Meanwhile, 120 kilometres upstream in Fargo, where a massive diking operation kept the state's largest city mostly dry, the waters were dropping by an 2.5 centimetres an hour.

But Grand Forks faced clear disaster. Journalists taken aloft in a national guard helicopter saw a city of 50,000 people transformed into a ghost town stranded amid a vast, chocolate-coloured swamp.

The business district, hit by a fire after floodwaters overpowered makeshift dikes Friday, was a blackened ruin and

motorboats manned by emergency crews pattered through the flooded streets looking for people and pets stranded amid the chaos.

Officials said they had moved a crane into downtown atop a flatbed truck to begin demolition work on the several city blocks that were consumed by the fire.

Despite the crisis, police reported only two burglaries — of an auto parts store and a pawn shop — and said efforts were now concentrated on removing people to safety.

Police spokesman Byron Sieber said a blind man and a "heavily medicated" 96-year-old woman had to be forcibly removed from their homes as floodwaters lapped at their doorsteps. Mr. Sieber also said he spotted two people riding jet.

Meanwhile, residents of the farming town of Emerson on the border with North Dakota were being evacuated Monday and the military was called in to help fortify dikes along the flooding Red River, authorities said.

"We're evacuating all 750 people by 8:00 p.m. Tuesday," Emerson Mayor Wayne Arseny told Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon, who toured the threatened area.

Mr. Filmon said the province had requested emergency federal aid and that Canadian troops and army engineers were deployed as the threat of flooding increased.

"We've got 400 soldiers available in Manitoba and more elsewhere. We'll call upon them as needed," Mr. Filmon told Reuters.

The Red River is expected to crest in Emerson, about 160.9 kilometres south of Winnipeg, Wednesday.

Some highways in the area were already flooded and others were closed as bulldozers and residents moved in to shore up the ring dike surrounding the town with sandbags and other available materials.

Emergency vehicles stood by and helicopters hovered overhead through the morning as Emerson's main hospital was evacuated and hundreds of residents in the Red River Valley were notified to start evacuating their homes.

Further upstream, an emergency worker at St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba, said the river was rising 3.810 centimetres an hour there.

Authorities said the U.S.-Canada border near Emerson would close at midnight (CDT) tonight and traffic would be diverted to northwest Ontario or western Manitoba.

## U.K. Labour say Santer speech ill-judged intervention

LONDON (R) — The opposition Labour Party has accused European Commission President Jacques Santer of making an ill-judged intervention in Britain's election campaign with his spirited attack on Eurosceptic "doom merchants."

But his blunt message proved an electoral godsend for Prime Minister John Major, whose party has been shaken by divisions over Europe and grown fearful of intervention by Brussels and erosion of national sovereignty.

In a speech in Amsterdam Monday, Mr. Santer railed against what he called "unjustified and misplaced" outbursts of Euroscepticism.

"Do these doom merchants want us to step backwards towards a Europe only composed of simple trading arrangements?" he asked.

The speech provoked a frosty response from Labour's home affairs spokesman Jack Straw who told BBC Television: "I think it was ill-judged and unwise of him to make this intervention."

"It's been an understanding that members of the European commission do not interfere in the politics of the nation states, particularly at the time of an election," he said.

The Sun, Britain's best-selling tabloid which has switched its allegiance to Labour, said of Mr. Santer: "He clearly thinks he is president of Europe. Well he isn't. He's just a jumped-up pipsqueak of a civil servant."

But Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, who has moved toward the Eurosceptic wing of the ruling Conservative Party, was delighted by the speech: "I positively welcome it," he said.

Both Mr. Major and Labour leader Tony Blair have adopted a "wait and see" stance on whether Britain should join a single European currency, due to be launched in January 1999.

This contrasts sharply with France where President Jacques Chirac Monday called a snap parliamentary election aimed at revitalising the country before it joins the currency.

Mr. Chirac said a single EU currency was "essential if we want to assert ourselves as a great economic and political power" with the Euro on an equal footing with the dollar and the yen.

Mr. Major, trailing Mr. Blair by up to 20 percentage points in opinion polls for the May 1 election, passionately believes he can convince voters he is the right man to fight Britain's corner in Europe.

But many Conservative candidates, bidding to give the party an unprecedented fifth election win in a row, have said in their constituency election addresses that they would never vote to jettison the pound sterling.

Mr. Blair has given away his negotiating position in advance of the June European summit in Amsterdam.

"If it is right for Britain, I will keep my feet on the brakes. Mr. Blair would go to Amsterdam and put his foot on the accelerator to a federal Europe," Mr. Major claimed Monday.

Mr. Blair insisted in his one big foreign policy speech of the six-week campaign that he was the true British patriot.

"If there is a desire for a superstate, we will stop it. We want a Europe where national identities are not submerged," he said.

## Russia premier says deal with NATO possible on May 27

PRAGUE (R) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Monday a pact between Russia and NATO could be signed on May 27, but that Moscow's opposition to the eastward expansion of the security alliance would not change.

NATO officials earlier said a new round of talks between alliance Secretary-General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, armed at overcoming remaining Russian objections, had been set for May 6 in Luxembourg.

Asked at a news conference if the deal could be signed on May 27, as stated by President Boris Yeltsin last week, Mr. Chernomyrdin said: "If the president said the 27th that means it will be ready on the 27th. As for NATO expansion, we will be against it even after that."

Mr. Yeltsin said in Germany last week that he hoped the NATO-Russia pact would be ready for signing in Paris on May 27.

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are leading contenders to be invited to join the alliance in a first wave of new members, expected to be announced at a NATO summit in Madrid in July.

Moscow, which opposes the expansion, has demanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should not station nuclear and other weapons in new member states and wants a binding treaty on relations between Russia and the alliance.

"It is not a question of NATO. We are talking about the military components of NATO," Mr. Chernomyrdin said after talks with Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus in Prague.

"We should not allow new

divisions to appear in Europe, new blocs. That is why we are today against the expansion of NATO," he added.

NATO officials, who have stressed enlargement would proceed whether or not a deal with Russia has been signed, have said that the alliance has "no intentions, no plans, no reasons" to place foreign troops or nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.

The Czechs have said Russia's security concerns must be taken into account but say there can be no turning back on NATO expansion. Mr. Klaus said he understood Moscow's security concerns, but added that Czech NATO membership is "an expression of our interest in our security."

"We discussed our positions in detail. They are not identical because they are based on the different spe-

cific interests of the two countries. But I nevertheless believe that these differences of opinion will not lead to any complications in our future relations," Mr. Klaus said.

Relations between Czechs and Russians remain for many overshadowed by the 1968 Warsaw Pact intervention to crush the Prague Spring attempt to introduce "socialism with a human face" in then Communist Czechoslovakia.

But Mr. Chernomyrdin and Mr. Klaus both stressed the need for closer cooperation, particularly in the economic field. "No going back, no repetition, but cooperation," Mr. Chernomyrdin said.

The two prime ministers also signed an addendum to a 1994 agreement on settling debt from Russia and the former Soviet Union to the Czech Republic, which

## Romania pushes case for NATO membership in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) —

Romania pressed its case in Washington Monday for early NATO membership, winning warm words from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright but no public assurances it would be among the first to join.

"We are sure that Romania could comply, could meet the criteria for NATO membership," Foreign Minister Adrian Severin said before talks with Albright at the state department.

"We are looking towards NATO and towards our NATO membership as being the confirmation of a unified Europe and as being the confirmation that Romania really belongs to the democratic family," he added.

Mrs. Albright, appearing before reporters with Mr. Severin, said she applauded Romania's aspiration to join the Western alliance, but she insisted that "no decisions have been made as of yet on who will enter NATO immediately."

The alliance will announce at a summit in Madrid in July which formerly Communist countries will be the first to be invited to apply for membership.

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are seen as front-runners, with Romania and Slovenia considered possible.

France is Romania's chief backer in NATO, but the United States has also warmed towards Bucharest since a reformist government took over from ex-Communists last year.

Mrs. Albright reaffirmed that those countries not invited to join this year would still be eligible later.

"While NATO's enlargement will begin at Madrid it will not end there," she said.

"The door to NATO membership will remain open. The first shall not be the last and we are very pleased with the partnership activities that we have been involved (in) with Romania already," she added.

## Australian book claiming aboriginals were cannibals revives race debate

SYDNEY (AFP) — A new book by supporters of right wing MP Pauline Hanson revived Australia's race debate and sparked a fresh firestorm Tuesday with its claim that aboriginals are their young.

"Pauline Hanson: The Truth" includes so-called "eyewitness" accounts of how aboriginals living near Cooktown in northern Queensland last century cannibalised family members after clubbing them to death.

"They killed and ate their own women and children and occasionally their men," said the book, being sold to raise funds for Hanson's newly launched one nation political party. "The older women were often killed for eating purposes like livestock," it said.

As Hanson's supporters including David Ettridge, national director of One Nation, defended the book as "well researched," various experts denounced it Tuesday as distorted or unsubstantiated by any evidence.

A leading authority on aboriginal history, Professor Henry Reynolds of Townsville's James Cook University, described the claims as "pretty disturbing" and said they were unsupported by any historical evidence.

"I don't think there's any credible evidence in the historical anthropological literature to sustain that," he told ABC radio.

"I mean, certainly there were writers in the 19th century who wrote sensational material along these lines, but to think that any one in the late 20th century can take it seriously and put it forth without any evidence whatsoever I think is pretty disturbing."

He said in a radio interview that he was horrified to have been quoted in such a book and described Hanson as "more savage than any of the aboriginals."

Ettridge said the book had been intended to correct the history being taught in Australian schools and that other reference books supported its claims.

"Most people don't know that the aboriginal tribes were warring tribes and that they ate their new-born and they ate each other after wars and whatever," Ettridge said.

Clinton approves Burma sanctions

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has approved imposing economic sanctions against Burma due to human rights abuses by the Burmese military government, an administration official said early Tuesday.

The State Department was expected to announce the sanctions, which will involve banning new U.S. investment in Burma, later Tuesday, the official told Reuters.

Mr. Clinton approved the sanctions, which will ban new U.S. investment in Burma, within the past few days, the official told Reuters.

The official said Mr. Clinton decided to go ahead with sanctions because Burma's military government had become "increasingly repressive lately" and was ignoring international calls for progress toward a democratically elected government.

The United States and many other Western countries have criticised Burma for human rights abuses and for failing to recognise the democratically elected government of the opposition National League for Democracy, which was co-founded by Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Mr. Suu Kyi was under house arrest for six years for her criticism of the Rangoon government. Mr. Clinton can impose sanctions on Burma if the democracy leader is arrested again or the situation in Burma worsens.

Last week, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright turned up the pressure on Burma, criticising its military government for failing to respond to appeals to improve human rights.

"Burmese leaders are on notice that, unless the clouds of repression are lifted, they will face investment sanctions under U.S. law," Mrs. Albright said in a speech to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

The 53-member U.N. Human Rights Commission last week also passed a res-

olution voicing concern about continuing rights violations by Burma's military rulers, including extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, deaths in custody, torture, arbitrary arrests and forced child labour.

The Burmese government has accused the United States of using the threat of economic sanctions against it like a weapon aimed at destroying basic rights of the Burmese people.

The Burmese spokesman told Reuters that his government was more concerned about the situation in Burma than was the United States or any other foreign nation.

"If the U.S. is so genuinely concerned about the human rights of the Myanmar (Burmese) people, why is it so necessary to deprive one of the most essential rights of the Myanmar people — the right to earn a living and support the family?" he asked.

## North, south split as leaders prepare for Earth Summit II

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) —

North-south frictions are bedeviling environmental negotiations here as world leaders prepare for a June summit here which will take the pulse of our sick planet.

Delegates are meeting here until Friday to prepare for the June 23-27 special session of the 185-nation U.N. General Assembly, called to review progress and to chart the way ahead following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio.

The Rio summit notably adopted conventions on

combating climate change, protecting wildlife and plants and curbing desertification.

The June review conference is to be attended by a number of heads of state and government, including those of the world's main industrialised nations, who according to delegates will inject a strong political impetus into the process.

Environmental activists hope that the world leaders will commit their countries to new caps on the greenhouse gases that cause glob-

al warming, ahead of a key international conference on climate change scheduled in the Japanese city of Kyoto in December.

Delegates at the three-week preparatory session are currently negotiating the final text to be adopted by the June conference, with concerns focusing on diminishing water resources, energy conservation and the depletion of the world's forests.

But as happened in Rio, the forum here has produced a split between the develop-

ing south and the industrialised north.

More than 130 countries in the so-called group of 77 are clamouring for the developed countries to live up to a promise in Rio in which they offered financial support and the transfer of environmentally-sound technology to the developing world.

According to delegates, the group of 77 is systematically proposing revisions to the draft text on the major issues, including reducing fossil fuel consumption and

pollution caused by combustion, in a bid to put pressure on the north on financing.

Kevin Dunyon, director of Friends of the Earth International, said Monday the stand "may be a calculated strategy, but it is a dangerous one. While the question of financial support is important, these are two separate issues. The climate of the Earth is too important to risk on a negotiating strategy."

Some delegates expressed concern that because of the

blockage, the conference could wind up Friday without completion of the draft text.

But conference chairman Mostafa Tolba of Egypt told journalists here that "we are not at all panicking at this stage."

He said that if the session here failed to finalise its work, a committee would continue to negotiate the final text on the sidelines of the June special session.

Environment ministers who attended the first week of discussions here agreed

that conserving fresh water has been thrust to the top of the agenda, with the United Nations warning that world water stocks are not being replenished and could start drying up by the year 2025.

European delegations, their countries threatened by drought, are pressing for the adoption of a global plan of action to counter the problem.

"Water is the next oil crisis," says Canadian Environment Minister Sergio Marchi, referring to the 1973 oil crisis which

pushed up prices and forced governments to take conservation measures.

Whatever the outcome of the June session, world leaders are anxious to attend.

Many U.N. diplomats, including several ambassadors, spent the entire weekend at the United Nations to ensure that their government representatives obtained a prominent place on the speakers' list which opened for registration Monday.



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation

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## Preparing for elections

THERE ARE two major efforts to merge political parties which have remained outside the orbit of the National Constitutional Party (NCP) that succeeded in merging eight centrist parties recently. There is on one side a bid by some members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and leftist parties to forge a coalition in preparation for the next general elections. Concerned by the merger of eight centrist parties under the banner of the NCP, Islamist Deputy Abdullah Akaleh is spearheading the efforts to form a coalition between the IAF and leftist parties on the premise that the two ideologically different groups can still cement a viable working relationship and run under one ticket.

On another side, there is a determined effort by "moderate leftists" to forge a similar constellation of political parties under the guidance of Suleiman Arar's Mustakbal Party and other political personalities including former prime ministers Taher Masri and Ahmad Obeidat, and Deputy Bassam Haddadin.

It appears more probable that the moderate leftists' effort to unite would succeed where the IAF-leftists attempts would fail. It is one thing to create a coalition between centrist parties whether on the right or the left, which enjoy several common denominators on ideology and purpose, than to establish an operational link between parties which differ on several fundamental principles and objectives. This is not to mention that the IAF is strong enough to wage an election battle on its own. The IAF could still emerge as a main political party in a three-way political party race that would include the NCP and the projected united front of moderate leftists. As things stand now, the newly merged NCP could prove to be an invincible match against the IAF if it stands alone in the upcoming parliamentary elections. It would be a fair match if the NCP faces the IAF and the combined forces of the moderate leftists.

A marriage of convenience between the right and the far-left may appear necessary under the new circumstances, but the odds against its long-term success are great. There are some meeting points between the right and far-left on some foreign policy issues and on a selected number of domestic policy considerations. But cohesion between centrists on either the right, as has already been done, or the moderate left, as is being now envisioned, would seem more durable and promising in the long-run.

We have a long way to go before seeing a clear crystallisation of political trends into definite party forms on par with the political sophistication that exists in more advanced democratic nations. And as long as the political currents in the country are still volatile and in search of a clear identity, forming coalitions, even between similar political trends, would seem more sensible in the transitional period on the way to a final regrouping of political currents on a more sophisticated level.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Tuesday discussed the Jordanian-European partnership agreement which was initiated in Malta recently and raised questions about its details which, he said, remain unknown to the Jordanian public. Fahed Fanek said that the Jordanian public has the right to know the volume of the agricultural quota allowing Jordan to export crops to European markets, to know about the intellectual property rights and about the amount of European financial and technical aid expected for Jordan under the agreement. The writer said that such matters are of vital importance for the Kingdom where the various political and economic sectors should be involved in discussions because they have a direct impact on the people's lives. Perhaps, he said, these issues have been shelved momentarily by the concerned sectors because the implementation of the agreement will not take place before 1999, but a debate on these issues is important so that the public may realise the benefits and advantages of such an accord. On the whole, the writer said, Jordanians want to know from the government if their country will be offered privileges and favourable conditions and treatment no less than those offered to Morocco, Tunisia and Israel under the terms of similar partnership agreements.

A WRITER for Al Dustour reflected on the scandal in which the prime minister of Israel was reportedly involved and for which he was investigated by the judiciary. Oraib Rintawi said that the mere investigation into the case which involved Netanyahu's alleged breach of public trust and fraud reflects a true exercise in democracy, especially as the accusations were levelled at the person of the prime minister. In contrast, the Arab media, which reported the scandal and the investigations which adversely affected Netanyahu's credibility, enjoy no right or power to publish similar accusations or charges against ministers or heads of states in their Arab World, said the writer. While in Israel the public holds their prime minister accountable for his actions, in the Arab World, people continue to send cables of allegiance to the regimes, especially those which came to power through military coups and continue to rule with an iron fist, the writer pointed out. The writer expressed the view that very few officials in the Arab World would remain in their present key positions if free expression and genuine forms of democracy were allowed to have their way.

## The Washington Watch

# 'The stage is set for press and public opinion to be even more responsive to Arab concerns'

IT IS not only organised political power that has given supporters of Israel a dominant role in U.S. politics. Of equal importance has been their ability to use that power to shape American public views about the Middle East.

They have succeeded in this effort not only with politicians but in the popular culture of the U.S. as well. For decades now Israel has been understood in the U.S. as "A tiny democracy that shares our values," "a beleaguered ally," "a people who only want peace, surrounded by Arabs who only want war"; and other slogans that were repeated often enough, put into literature, made into movies and delivered in speeches until they were believed.

This is not to say that there were no large groups in the U.S. who refused to accept this dominant view. Arabs have always had allies, even in Congress and in the executive branch. But even these allies were sometimes afraid to publicly confront the dominant view — either for fear of political retribution or because it was too difficult to argue a case that was so little understood or appreciated by the public.

It is important to understand that this has been the political and cultural context in the United States for a number of decades, precisely in order to grasp the significance of the results of a number of recent public opinion polls. The findings of these polls establish that there has been a dramatic sea change in U.S. public attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In two separate polls, one conducted by the Harris Company, the other by

Zogby International, it is clear that the U.S. public has moved towards a greater sense of balance and fairness in its understanding of the Middle East.

These are the results: — Two Arab leaders, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein were viewed as being more committed to peace than Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. — Americans view Israel and the Palestinians equally at fault for the current crisis in the Middle East peace process.

— By almost five to one, Americans oppose Israel's settlement construction in East Jerusalem and want it to stop. — By four to one, Americans support the Palestinian's right to statehood.

— By a significant majority, Americans want U.S. Middle East policy to be more balanced and less pro-Israeli; and

— Americans are divided over whether Jerusalem should be under sole Israeli control or divided between Israeli and Palestinian control — with a plurality supporting a divided city.

Reviewing U.S. polls taken during the 1970s and 1980s demonstrates just how dramatic the change has been:

— Only Egyptian President Sadat had higher ratings than an Israeli leader.

— No Israeli leader has ever had a net negative rating. Even Begin, during the 1982 assault on Lebanon, had a strong positive rating.

— Americans always gave greater sympathy for Israel and greater blame for the Palestinians. Israel usually bested the Arabs in

American opinion ten to one — during the war in Lebanon this dropped to four to one, but quickly recouped;

— Americans never before expressed strong opposition to an Israeli move. Israel's actions in Lebanon were supported by U.S. popular opinion, as were past Israeli settlement developments — even when they were called illegal by the State Department.

— When asked whether U.S. policy should support Israel or be balanced, Americans almost always gave stronger support to a policy that would favour Israel; and

— In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when asked who should control Jerusalem, American support for sole Jewish control over the city was in the 67 to 72 per cent range, with the divided city option always receiving less than 25 per cent.

There have been significant factors that account for this shift:

— Camp David, despite Arab opposition, created a breakthrough in U.S. opinion. For the first time, an Arab leader emerged as a peace maker; the U.S. became a partner in the search for peace; the issue of Palestinian rights was put on the table to be debated by public opinion; and Israeli intransigence was put to the test;

— The Israeli assault on Lebanon exposed Americans to Israel's brutality. Even though Americans continued to support Israel's objectives in the war, ultimately Israeli behaviour in Lebanon took a toll on U.S. support for that country;

— The Palestinian intifada

brought home, once again, Israeli brutality. The drama of a mass Palestinian uprising created a swell of support and won more allies for Arab causes;

— The Bush-Baker design for a Middle East peace process and the abstinence of the Likud government established once again the tremendous importance that the U.S. places on the search for Middle East peace. This peace process also projected for the first time the Palestinian voice directly to a large and increasingly receptive U.S. audience;

— With the Clinton administration, Americans once again, as in the Carter years, found themselves fully immersed in the search for peace.

While some Arabs have opposed the conduct of President Clinton, especially his refusal to publicly criticise Israel, Americans have read him, especially in several key instances (the White House ceremonies, the Washington summit and his meetings with Arab leaders, including Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat), as being committed to balance; and in other instances, of being disturbed by Israeli behaviour.

The election of Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has contributed greatly to changing American opinion. He is articulate but considered glib and untrustworthy — in some ways, Netanyahu is too much like the prototypical American politician that Americans simply do not trust; and

— Finally, it is important to acknowledge the role played by emerging Arab American organisations that have provided an American

voice to Arab concerns, challenged the press and politicians to show greater fairness and understanding in dealing with Middle East issues; and built coalitions and mobilised politically in the U.S. arena.

This much is known. There is a new political context in the U.S. The dominant pro-Israel construct that held sway over opinion and culture for more than a generation is crumbling. Politicians can deliver strident pro-Israel speeches but only before pro-Israel audiences — but the press and the broader public now greet such displays with a cynical edge.

The stage is set for both press and public opinion to be even more responsive to Arab concerns.

The question remains: What will we do about it? Both Arabs and Arab Americans must define strategies, each in its own way, to meet this challenge. Information work and political organising efforts must be intensified. Arab leaders must communicate directly with the U.S. press and public. And embassies should increase their political and educational outreach efforts.

Arab Americans must step up their work: by taking their challenge to Congress and by organising the constituencies of key members of Congress. If politicians insist on adhering to the old, unbalanced, pro-Israel construct, then their constituents should be informed and organised to act.

While the significance of this moment cannot be underestimated, neither can the possibility that this opportunity may pass if it is not acted upon.

By Dr. James Zogby

# 'Palestinian Legislative Council needs to strongly assert itself to ensure survival'

By Ziad Abu Amr

The writer is a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from Gaza. The following article is a translation of an article that has appeared in the Arabic daily Al Ra'i:

THE FIRST legislative elections for the Palestinian National Council, held on Jan. 20, 1996, provided the Palestinians with an opportunity to build a democratic society and a modern political system. The elections themselves, though, were and are not enough to achieve democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights. In fact, 15 months after the elections, one can say that the Palestinians are no closer to their aspirations now than they were a year ago.

Participation in the election was wide despite opposition from different political forces, like the Islamists and some Palestinian political elite who were against the Oslo accords. It was, nevertheless, encouraging and positive due to a number of reasons: the Palestinians were allowed to practise their democratic rights; they had the option to decide on their own future and they wanted to have the chance to influence the end result of negotiations with Israel. Except for a few minor incidents, the elections were held in a democratic atmosphere.

After the elections, the Palestinians followed with anxiety the work of the council to see if the candidates would keep their pre-election promises. Ever since the first meeting, March 3, 1996, the council members showed enthusiasm and diligence, aware of the moral, political and national responsibility on their shoulders.

Now, one year after the council was elected, the Palestinians feel disappointed. The council has not achieved any of its goals: it failed to assume its role as a legislative power and to clearly delineate the responsibility of the three state pow-

ers — legislative, executive and judicial — or oversee their actions. It even failed to approve draft laws it had discussed several times.

The basic law, the constitution, remained in the drawers of the executive power for months, even though the legislative council had approved it when it was first referred to it. The municipal and local elections as well as the civil service law met with the same fate.

The council has so far failed to hold meetings, independent of the PLO Executive Committee, with representative of the Palestine National Council (PNC), with peace negotiators or with heads of security forces. This is justified by the fact that the PLO insists on overseeing all national political activity. If, however, the cabinet does not manage to hold its meetings independently to solve problems and discuss issues under its jurisdiction, it cannot be held accountable.

The same applies to the judicial authority. So far, the judiciary does not enjoy true independence and, as such, cannot practise its role effectively. An example is the case when a higher court judge in Ramallah ordered the release of two students but the Palestine National Authority did not comply.

The council has so far failed to make the PNA abide by the rule of law. Ministries and heads of governmental departments still do not come under the council's scrutiny: neither do the security forces. Basic human rights are violated. Individuals are arrested, detained or released without proper trials or legal procedures and prisoners are treated brutally.

The council has been unable to end chaos, insubordination and financial and administrative corruption in government departments. It has also failed to force the executive authority to use transparency in its financial policies.

There is a number of reasons why the council reached its

current state of weakness, impotence and low credibility.

First, in the atmosphere of enthusiasm brought upon by the elections, the candidates and voters overlooked the fact that by virtue of its mandate the council would be less powerful than they thought.

Second, due to the manner in which the Palestinian leadership views the role of the legislative council, it seems that the leadership had ulterior motives when initiating the elections: seemingly it had more to do with satisfying the Israeli demands than with institutionalising Palestinian democracy.

Third, it appears that the emerging Palestinian body politic is so far incapable of transforming from a state of revolution into a civic society. The reason is not only the leadership's attitude but also the role of the different civic organisations. Although transition periods are usually complex and slow and the council's performance lacks in many aspects, it can still be used to speed up the transformation process.

Fourth, it is obvious that the balance of power is in favour of the executive authority that has and uses all political, administrative and financial means to reach its ends, including brutal force. The executive authority is not expected to relinquish any of its powers and the legislative to scrutinise its activities. The executive authority, which monopolises the political, economic and security resources of the Palestinians, has no interest in strengthening a weak council or in becoming accountable to it.

Fifth, the charisma, the tremendous influence and legitimacy of Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO and PNA, and his distinguished manner of leadership hinder the council's authority or its appropriation of any real power from the executive authority.

Sixth, reportedly, there have been successful attempts to lessen the legislative council's

importance. One year of unsuccessful attempts to ascertain their independence, has left the majority of the council's members with a feeling of emptiness and loss. Some seem to have accepted the state of helplessness and are simply enjoying privileges they never enjoyed before. In addition, the council lacks experienced and efficient people to guide it to proper parliamentary life and initiate a civic society.

Seventh, Israel's policy of signing treaties with the Palestinian Authority and constantly violating them diverts the council from its legislative responsibility, drawing it into the political arena. The Oslo

agreements also impose restrictions on the movement of the council members in the Palestinian territories.

Finally, if the Legislative Council will continue its current policy for the remaining three years of its life, the Palestinians will have very little to be proud of. The Palestinians will have lost their opportunity to live their own democratic experience in a region where the West says only Israel practises true democracy. And that will most probably lead to erosion in sympathy for the Palestinian cause and weakening of the world's financial support for Palestinian state building.

## LETTERS

### Bdoul — a valuable asset

To the Editor:

IN THE article "Petra is not just for Jordan or the archaeologists, it is a world cultural heritage" (Jordan Times, April 16, 1997), once again the Bdoul bedouins of Petra were portrayed as a threat to the national heritage. They have lived in Petra for many, many years and their knowledge of the site, of the back country, and of the flora and the fauna of the region makes them as much a part of the national heritage as the ancient monuments are a part of that heritage.

Recently, in other parts in the world, peoples occupying lands that have become national parks have been successfully made part of the process. Such an approach at Petra would be much more productive than simply criticising the Bdoul for living and trying to work where they have always lived and worked. They have shown their value to Petra in many ways — twice I have seen them, in flash flood conditions, organise themselves to rescue dozens of tourists stranded in the back country. No one asked them to do it, they just did it. Their presence has caused many visitors to comment that one of the things that makes Petra special is that it is alive and not just another barren archaeological site. As an archaeologist working at Petra, I have seen the value of their knowledge of the site and have certainly seen that they are much less of a threat to Petra than are the developers.

Jordan should incorporate the Bdoul into the development of Petra. They could serve, if they choose, as park rangers, guides, guards, emergency personnel, conservators and archaeologists. They are not a problem to be dealt with as the mentioned article would have it. They are a valuable human resource to be developed.

Patricia M. Bikai, Amman.

## IT OCCURRED TO ME...

# To sleep, perchance to dream

By Ali Kassay

THE YEAR 1997 appears to be a happy one for parliamentary elections. For a while now, headline space in the British press has been taken up mainly by the latest accusations and counter-accusations exchanged between government and the opposition. In Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced his intention to lead his party into elections for the fifth time. In France, President Jacques Chirac has just announced that he was too impatient to wait for elections to come due, and that he would hold them ten months earlier than scheduled. Everybody everywhere is excited about elections.

Jordan has not remained untouched by this frenzy. Even though our polls are still quite a while away, preparations have already started in earnest.

Recently, a number of parties that were highly similar to one another in their philosophies, outlooks, political programmes — in fact in most respects except for the tribal origins of their respective leaders, have seen the sense of coalescing into one party. In the past such attempts at coalition building were foiled because the tribe of each party leader threatened not to vote for him in the elections unless he were also the leader of the coalition, which prompted one alliance to present itself to the world with three secretaries general. Or maybe it is secretary generals. Or maybe there is a good reason why no one had thought of this contingency when they invented the English language, nor since. Perhaps as a result, the identity of the leader of this bigger and better coalition remains so far within the category of constructive ambiguity.

Not to be outdone by this move, other parties are suggesting a preposterous coalition between the Islamic Action Front and the "left", such as it exists.

This sent me thinking which way I should vote when I come to the ballot. My initial inclination was to vote for the party or group, or even individual that showed vitality and dynamism, and that had the most far-reaching effect during the past session. This left me still at a loss. You see, the number of bills initiated by deputies, taken as a ballpark figure, and rounded up for simplicity, amounted to one. One bill in four years. As for the number of bills defeated in Parliament... it was zilch. Not a sausage. Not only that, but deputies who had been elected on the strength of their promise to annex certain things, like the sales tax, for instance, voted eagerly in favour of raising it.

So what did the representatives of the people do during the past four years? Of course, there was the occasional exchange of ashtrays, glasses of water, and assorted unidentified flying objects and adjectives, which gave a lot of work to the tabloids, and much amusement to the public. Still, that apart, our gallant deputies must have done something, because whenever television cameras pan through the House of Parliament while in session, everyone seems to be sleeping off some unidentified exertion. Recently, when I succumbed to the flu and spent several days asleep in bed, it was hard to convince any of my friends that I was not in training for a career in parliament.

The only explanation I can think of, is that there is a secretive, malignant and anti-democratic force that sprays soporific gas into the air vents of Parliament's climate control system, which suggests to me the next good cause that I should champion. Perhaps I may stand for elections on a platform that calls for saving the Jordanian deputy from a life under acute sedation.

In American classrooms, blackboard and ballpoint pen are rapidly giving way to computer and joystick

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## Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Ministry of tourism forms teams to inspect picnic areas

**\*\* FOLLOWING** A national campaign implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to clean, upgrade and beautify all touristic sites and picnic areas in the Kingdom, Tourism Minister Aqel Beltagi has decided to entrust specialised committees from his ministry to conduct field tours and inspection visits to all such locations to ensure all services, cleanliness and safety measures are provided and being strictly implemented.

The campaign covered Zai, Wadi Zuhair, Zaza and Sweimeh where cleaning teams, comprising some 60 labourers, were busy for the past two weeks in removing dirt and food leftovers from the sites and especially the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. Mr. Beltagi and the Canadian ambassador in Amman, accompanied by other officials from the ministry, joined in the cleaning efforts and inspected the work which went on daily even during the holidays of the 'Eid.

The beautifying campaign was most evident on a 120 dunums on the Dead Sea shore adjacent to the resthouse of the Social Security Corporation. The area was equipped with all required services and manned round-the-clock with personnel from the Ministry of Tourism to serve the public and respond to their demands (Al Dustour).

### IFC invests and lends \$18 million to Zara Company

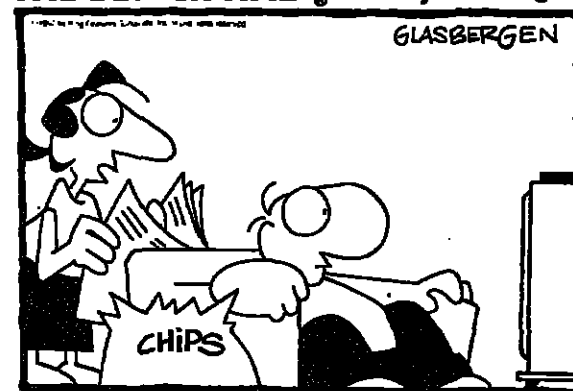
**\*\* THE INTERNATIONAL Finance Corporation (IFC)** has agreed to invest \$3 million equity in the capital of Zara Investment Company which is a public shareholding firm established in 1994 as a holding company and currently has a JD40 million capital. The IFC has also agreed to extend a \$15 million loan, JD10 million of which will be used to finance the Grand Hyatt hotel project and the southern Zara Centre attached to it. The remaining \$5 million will be used to finance the Movenpick/Dead Sea project and the health centre attached to it.

### Royal Jordanian initials programme to cut energy bill

**\*\* FOLLOWING AN** agreement signed between Royal Jordanian (RJ) and the Energy Management Services Co. (EMS), a major project has started to demonstrate the energy saving potential at RJ facilities. The agreement calls for EMS to perform a comprehensive study of energy use and consumption at all RJ facilities.

The study will include energy use monitoring, consumption evaluation, providing packaged services for reducing energy consumption and improving operational performances. The study will be followed by an implementation stage which will place to realise the proposed energy conservation measures.

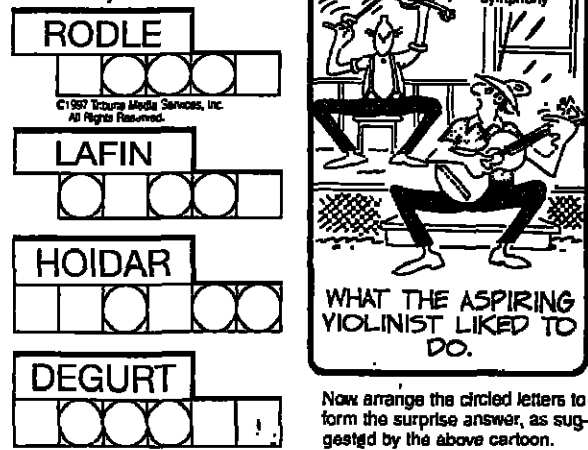
### THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"It's hard to believe that you and John Kennedy Jr. have the exact same horoscope!"

### JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer:     (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: HAZEL, CEASE, CRAVAT, PLOWED  
Answer: Ants can turn a kitchen into this - A CRAWL SPACE

## Cement company to offer potential investors modified proposals soon

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

**AMMAN** — A senior official at the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC) said Monday that the corporation is prepared to start recontacting potential investors to buy its shares in the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) and may do so as early as next month.

His announcement follows a government decision prior to the 'Eid Al Adha holiday to increase the price of cement by 10 per cent.

"This (decision), along with other modifications to the last proposal should help us better attract investors," he said.

The JIC, charged with divesting government assets, last August expressed its intent to sell 20 per cent of its stake in the cement company, and a proposal was presented to companies willing to sign a technical assistance and management agreement.

However, following 16 disappointing offers from international companies specialising in the cement industry, JIC Director General Mohammad Batayneh announced that the government would sell 33 per cent (20 million shares) of its equity in order to satisfy demands from investors that they be able to hold veto power on the company's board.

This has recently been accompanied by other amendments to the proposal which originally stipulated that investing enterprises provide technical assistance and management services to the cement company. The technical service agreement has been scratched from the new proposal, the official said.

"[The technical service agreement] was part of the 'strategic partner' idea which we sought with the first proposal," he said. "It had a lot of parameters, and we decided that [determining these parameters] was not really our role as the JIC. Therefore, it has been deleted and these details and decisions will be left to the cement company to decide."

The JIC is no longer seeking a strategic partner specifically, he said, but will allow a consortium of investors including a strategic partner.

Additionally, he said, the government's decision to raise the price of cement by ten per cent (approximately JD4.70 per tonne) will make investment in the company more attractive for investors. The price of cement is fixed by the government. However, in 1996, the government increased the prices of water, electricity and fuel, boosting cement's production cost without a parallel increase in price of the product.

"Now, we have a formula by which we can adjust the price of cement accordingly," the official said.

In securing a strategic partner for the cement corporation, the JIC and the management of the cement company hope to upgrade the quality and competitiveness of Jordanian cement and ensure a higher volume of sales to neighbouring countries, particularly the Palestinian self-rule territories, where Jordan currently has an agreement with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to export 400,000 tonnes of cement annually, as well as Syria and Israel.

The JCFC is expected to face substantial competition in the region in coming years. The PNA announced last year plans to establish a cement factory in the West Bank which would somewhat end their dependence on cement imports from Jordan and Egypt.

Additionally, a Swiss cement group, Holderbank, active in Egypt until 1961 when the Egyptian government nationalised the Egyptian Cement Company (ECC), will return to production in that country. The ECC announced last November that Holderbank would add \$14.1 million to the company's capital and expressed intentions to invest \$16.9 million in a new plant under construction outside Cairo.

The JCFC was founded in 1952 and its present capital is JD60 million. Market value of the share as of Tuesday was JD3.780. Par value is JD1.

## Cabinet plans wider measures to boost foreign investments

By Tareq Ayoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

**AMMAN** — Information Minister Samir Mutaweh said Tuesday that more measures will be implemented to encourage foreign investments in the Kingdom.

Dr. Mutaweh, who was speaking to reporters following a Cabinet session, said the Cabinet was briefed by Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani on the government's steps to attract foreign investors.

Dr. Mutaweh added that during the three-hour Cabinet session, Dr. Anani reviewed obstacles and barriers which impede foreign investment in the Kingdom.

Dr. Mutaweh said that among the measures discussed were removing bureaucratic barriers and delays which the investors might face at different ministries.

He added that a new mechanism will be adopted to facilitate the entry of investors to the Kingdom and instructions will be given to all border points not to delay their entry.

The minister said the Cabinet discussed projects in Aqaba and added that meetings will be held with Aqaba Authority chief, Fayed Khasawneh, to discuss and remove obstacles hindering touristic projects in Aqaba.

## Dubai free zone seeks more Japanese investment

**DUBAI (AFP)** — Dubai's free zone will send a delegation to Japan in May to seek more capital even though the Far East industrial giant is already among the top investors in the zone, its chairman has said.

Sultan Ben Sulayem said Japan was showing strong interest in the Jebel Ali Zone, with the number of its companies investing in the facility increasing to 44 at the end of 1996 from 29 at the end of 1995.

"The zone is interested in attracting more foreign companies, especially from Japan. A delegation will visit Japan in May to promote

investment in the zone," he told Emirates Today economic weekly.

Around 1,100 firms have investments of more than \$3 billion in Jebel Ali, the biggest free zone in the oil-rich Gulf. A large number of them are from Japan and other industrial states but their investments are concentrated on marketing, distribution and small manufacturing units.

Japanese companies have been attracted to Dubai as it is the main transshipment centre in the Middle East and is located in the heart of a vast Asian market of more than one billion consumers.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 22/04/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
249,000	213,000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	5	280	71600	256.00	255.00	1.00	-
2,100	1,790	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	2	400	727	1.81	1.80	0.01	-
5,500	4,100	CAIRO ARABIAN BANK	9.1	3.41	2	2000	8700	4.30	4.40	0.10	+
2,600	2,220	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.4	5.92	2	350	823	2.30	2.38	0.08	+
8,100	4,250	THE HOUSING BK.	13.1	2.83	11	4580	22337	4.88	4.88	-	-
2,950	2,440	JOR. KUALITY BANK	19.3	0.00	2	440	1170	2.68	2.66	0.02	-
1,090	800	JOR. GOLD BANK	4.9	8.54	4	3500	2855	0.81	0.82	0.01	+
1,870	1,450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	19.3	0.00	2	750	2700	3.60	3.60	-	-
2,800	1,380	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	P	0.00	1	100	142	1.42	1.42	-	-
1,440	1,000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	2	500	568	1.15	1.12	0.03	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 193.38	CHG: -0.30	32	12900	111621				
1,820	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.7	7.14	3	400	671	1.67	1.68	0.01	+
9,280	7,800	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	11.5	1.38	1	1000	8000	8.00	8.00	-	-
1,560	1,280	IRIDI ELECTRICITY	9.5	6.90	1	500	725	1.45	1.45	-	-
7,500	6,000	VEHICLE OWNERS FED.	7.8	4.93	2	3000	21300	7.00	7.10	0.10	+
5,050	4,100	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	16.9	3.01	2	800	3422	4.30	4.27	0.03	-
1,520	930	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	5	1450	1479	1.02	1.02	-	-
1,950	1,480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	25.2	0.00	1	1000	490	0.49	0.49	-	-
3,720	2,990	ARAB INTL. INV. INDG.	12.1	6.16	2	1250	3813	3.05	3.05	-	-
2,230	1,650	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.51	8	6500	10988	1.69	1.69	-	-
1,200	710	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	1	50	35	0.71	0.70	0.01	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 102.91	CHG: -1.23	27	15950	50923				
3,760	3,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.6	2.65	27	7918	29903	3.76	3.78	0.02	+
6,100	4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.9	3.39	1	450	2655	5.95	5.90	0.05	-
10,400	8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.3	7.84	8	814	8278	10.15	10.20	0.05	+
3,260	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	28.9	0.00	2	265	569	2.19	2.15	0.04	-
4,100	3,400	ARAB FERT. IND.	20.6	3.13	26	7950	30018	3.79	3.78	0.01	-
7,250	5,650	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.55	1	50	353	7.05	7.05	-	-
3,600	2,860	JOR. PAPER CARDBO.	14.7	3.50	2	326	932	2.86	2.86	-	-
1,760	1,180	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	1	250	295	1.22	1.18	0.04	-
5,910	4,250	ARAB PETROL. CO.	13.5	4.04	2	116	573	4.95	4.95	-	-
5,400	3,130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.2	9.09	1	150	495	3.31	3.30	0.01	-
1,960	1,450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	12.4	0.00	1	1000	840	0.84	0.84	-	-
1,370	1,040	ARAB PAPER CORV. IND.	10.9	6.45	1	1000	1070	1.07	1.07	-	-
920	540	NATIONAL INDG.	8.9	10.00	2	650	390	0.60	0.60	-	-
3,730	2,130	RAIL. CABLE WIRE, HFAC	16.2	0.00	8	1263	3338	2.63	2.66	0.03	+
1,170	570	JOR. SULPHUR-CEM.	9	0.00	12	10500	8038	0.76	0.76	-	-
1,670	1,120	ARAB PETROL. CHEM.	26.6	0.00	6	2050	2923	1.43	1.42	0.01	-
2,660	1,420	UNIV. MOD. INDG.	4.4	13.89	28	13650	19922	1.47	1.44	0.03	+
1,780	1,140	JOR. INDG. RESOURCES	16.0	8.40	2	600	958	1.21	1.19	0.02	-
1,230	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.2	0.00	26	31050	27415	0.88	0.89	0.01	+
2,360	1,750	EL - SAY READY MEAL	P	0.00	3	950	1682	1.78	1.77	0.01	-
1,360	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	27.5	0.00	1	200	234	1.17	1.17	-	-
1,440	900	UNION CH. & VEG.	28.8	0.00	9	2350	2160	0.92	0.91	0.01	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 117.71	CHG: -0.23	72	83752	142788				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 152.77	CHG: -0.32	231	112602	308331				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 22/04/1997											
680	370	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	2	1000	410	0.42	0.41	0.01	-
790	440	JOR. TRADE FAC.	12.0	0.00	7	16000	7200	0.45	0.45	-	-
840	670	UNION INV. SOC.	65.1	0.00	7	11000	1980	0.68	0.68	-	-
840	370	ARAB FERT. IND.	20.6	0.00	26	71350	35409	3.79	3.78	0.01	-
950	740	AL-SHARQ INV. 751	8	0.00	1	150	84	0.81	0.81	-	-
1,690	1,300	RAIL. CARBONATE	8	0.00	2	8250	11580	1.42	1.40	0.02	-
690	430	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	16.9	0.00	8	4200	1890	0.45	0.45	-	-
720	490	RAIL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	1	100	51	0.52	0.51	0.01	-
840	400	RAIL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	8	0.00	14	9841	6555	0.65	0.68	0.03	+
980	720	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	30	65000	50050	0.77	0.77	-	-
710	600	MIDWEST FERR. 751	8	0.00	1	1500	540	0.61	0.61	-	-
770	550	RAJAH FERR. 651	8	0.00	2	1200	326	0.63	0.63	-	-
640	390	INDG. ENG.	27.1	0.00	27	38250	16623	0.42	0.44	0.02	+
960	760	INDG. CHEMICAL	8	0.00	3	1500	1170	0.78	0.78	-	-
820	590	RAIL. POLYMER	8	0.00	7	14020	10273	0.70	0.69	0.01	-
1,020	830	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	59.0	0.00	1	700	588	0.84	0.84	-	-
870	590	MID. EAST COMPLEX	9.1	0.00	26	566100	457158	0.78	0.78	-	-
GRAND TOTAL			164	829951	601879						

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# 1st Division Basketball Championship

## First round enters final week

### as Jazireh, Orthodoxi clash Thursday

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's 1st Division Basketball Championship moves into high gear this weekend as the first round enters its final week.

Former champions Al Ahli, who improved their image after a 73-45 win over Al Hussein meet Al Jalil Wednesday while champions Al Orthodoxi meet Al Jazireh Thursday night.

#### Alhi-Jalil

Both teams in Wednesday night's match are in unenviable situation having to put their house in order during the competition.

The match is not expected to be a competitive one but merely a chance for Al Ahli to regroup and upgrade their faltering form.

The teams from Irbid, Al Jalil, were not at their best at the beginning of the competition but some of the teams best players are back on the lineup after resolving their differences with the club's board.

Their opponents are also now putting their house in order as Al Ahli's board this week handed new Armenian coach Raffi Cholukian their reigns after the team's humiliating 85-57 defeat to Al Jazireh last week.

Apparently referring to lack of discipline on the part of players, Cholukian's first statement was: "Only players who seriously attended practice should expect to play in the league."

Cholukian, a former head coach of the Soviet Union's national teams was

recruited for the purpose of taking over the club's teams with the hope of taking Al Ahli to new heights after they failed to win the title during the past two seasons.

He takes over from Ghaith Najjar, Al Ahli's coach for the past two seasons, during which the team was unable to reclaim the title and have been in a slumping form ever since.

Many top players like Naser Bushnaq, Yousef Zaghoul and Marwan Ma'touq have also since left the team.

Al Ahli were previously trained by Ukrainian Alexander Sacha who guided the team to a 1990 win ending Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 reign atop the Kingdom's basketball scene.

Al Ahli went on to win the crown in 1992, 93, 94 before Sacha left his post after apparent differences with the board.

#### Jazireh-Orthodoxi

The match of the week is the clash between new title contenders Al Jazireh and titleholders Al Orthodoxi.

After ending Al Ahli's short-lived reign two seasons ago, Al Orthodoxi now hope to win the title for the third consecutive year.

Trained by Murad Barakat, one of the greatest players in Jordanian basketball, Al Orthodoxi face an uphill battle as their opponents are one of the most unyielding players in the country.

After their big win over Al Ahli, Al Jazireh have sounded the alarm as serious contenders for the title.

The players seem to have undoubtedly benefited from their participation in the Arab Clubs tournament in Tunisia last month.

Under the guidance of coach Fadi Sabbah, Al Jazireh have come close to the title during the last two seasons, especially last year when they became the only team other than Al Orthodoxi to ever beat Al Ahli.

Since then, Al Jazireh have made the battle for the title a three-way race after fans became accustomed to only seeing Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi battle for the number one position.

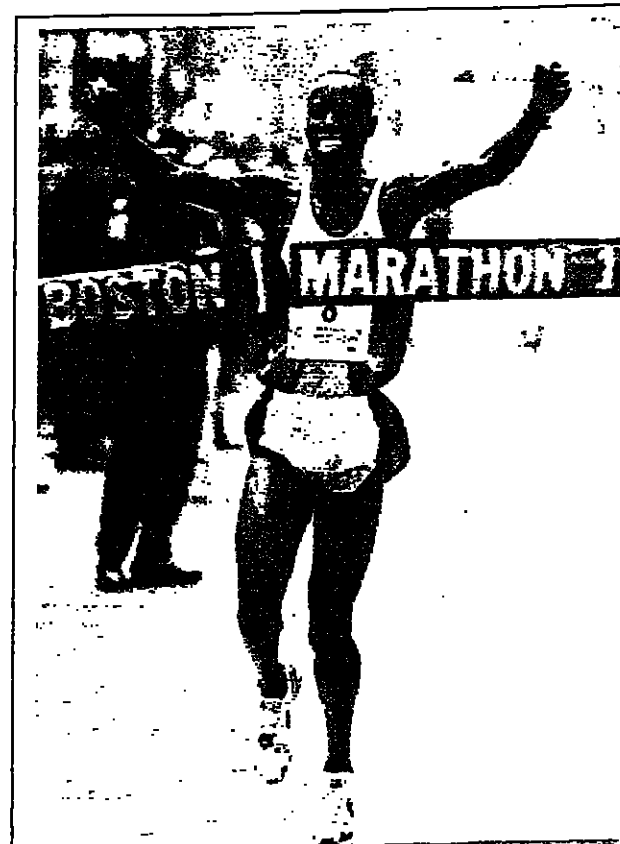
Thursday night's match is therefore crucial for both teams before the competition enters its second round April 30.

The match will be held at the Sports Palace at 6:15 p.m. JTV will air a recording of the match at 11:30 p.m.

#### STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	SE	SA	Pts
Jazireh	2	2	-	199	82	4
Orthodoxi	2	2	-	180	120	4
Jalil	3	1	2	168	239	4
Ahli	2	1	1	130	130	3
Hussein	3	-	3	141	247	-
*Yarmouk	-	-	-	-	-	-

\*Relegated to Second Division



Lameck Aguta of Kenya breaks the tape to win the 101st Boston Marathon in a time of 2:10:34 in Boston, April 21. Joseph Kamau of Kenya finished second and Mexican Dionicio Ceron was third (Reuters photo)

## Denver Nuggets fire coach Dick Motta, staff

DENVER (R) — The Denver Nuggets, who just completed the second-worst season in team history, fired head coach Dick Motta and his entire staff Monday.

Motta and assistants Jim Brovelli, Gene Little and Kip Motta, son of the head coach, were relieved of their duties after guiding the team to a 24-61 record, the Nuggets announced.

The 65-year-old Motta had replaced Bernie Bickerstaff, who stepped down as head coach November 26. But the team went just 17-52 under Motta with just five victories coming after the mid-season all-star break.

The Nuggets, who closed the season with

a 100-95 win at Dallas Sunday, never seemed to recover from the loss of centre Dikembe Mutombo to free agency prior to the season.

In addition, forward Laphonso Ellis was limited by injuries to 55 games and Sarunas Marciulionis appeared in just 17 games due to injuries.

Motta, who had one-year remaining on his Denver contract, came to the Nuggets from the Dallas Mavericks, where he posted 329 wins in nine seasons.

He is the second NBA coaching casualty in as many days after the Philadelphia 76ers fired Johnny Davis Sunday.

## Champions' League semi-finals live on Orbit-ESPN Sports

ORBIT-ESPN Sports will air exclusive coverage of both Champions' League second leg semi-finals on Wednesday, April 23.

Manchester United against Borussia Dortmund kicks-off the evening live at 6:25 p.m. GMT and is followed by the Juventus-Ajax of Amsterdam encounter at 8:30 p.m. GMT.

The Champions' League is the most prestigious club competition in the world and the semi-finals, played over two legs, brings together the four top teams in Europe.

There is still plenty to play for in both ties. In the live game English giants Manchester United must overcome a 1-0 deficit against Dortmund. With a packed Old Trafford cheering on the "Reds," it promises to be a thrilling encounter.

Defending champions Juventus will start as favourites in the second semi-final after winning 2-1 in Amsterdam in the first leg. However, the Dutch champions have not lost a European tie away from home for three seasons.

Orbit-ESPN will follow the Champions' League semi-finals with live coverage of the grand final in Munich on Wednesday, May 28.

Orbit-ESPN will also have live and exclusive coverage of the UEFA Cup-Winners Cup second leg semi-final between Liverpool and Paris St. Germain on Thursday, April 24 at 6:25 p.m. GMT.

Orbit-ESPN Sports will offer bilingual commentary for all games with English commentary on channel 19 and 89 and Arabic on channel 18 and 88.

## Costa brushes aside Portas to win Barcelona Open

BARCELONA (R) — Albert Costa brushed aside fellow Spaniard Albert Portas to win the Barcelona Open Monday, the day he moved into the top 10 of the world rankings for the first time.

Costa never looked in trouble during his 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Portas, a qualifier who was playing the first best-of-five-set match of his life.

"Getting to the top 10 is nice, but winning the Barcelona Open is much nicer," said Costa.

The final had been moved

to Monday because of heavy rain in Barcelona Sunday.

Portas, returning from a recent six-month lay-off due to a knee injury, was made to look out of his depth by Costa, who broke once in each set without losing his own serve.

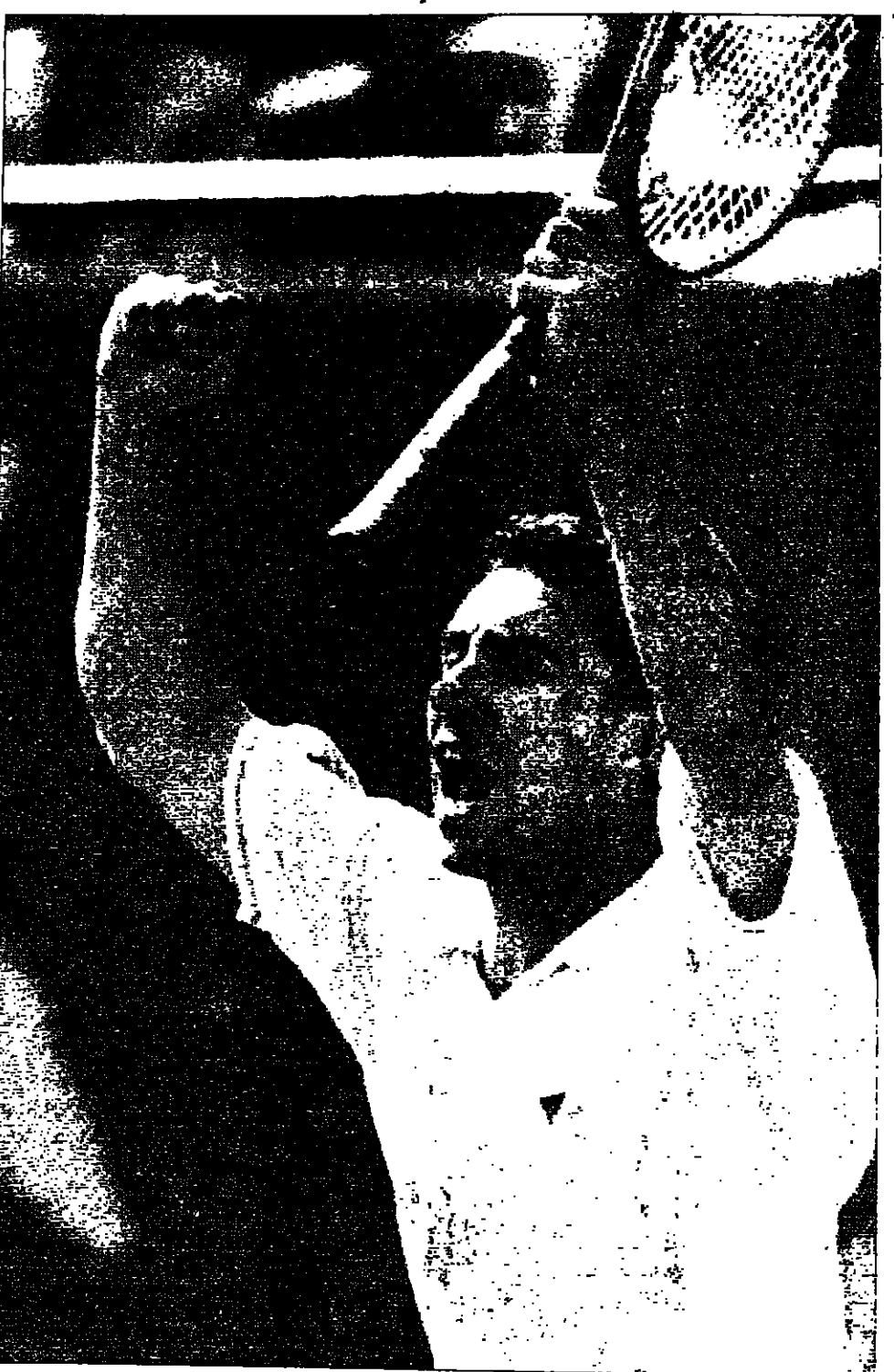
Portas, who started the tournament world ranked 133, was let down by his powerful forehand which had helped him to victory in earlier rounds over seeded players Marcelo Rios and Alberto Berasategui.

The match had gone with

serve until the 11th game of the first set when Portas committed three errors to lose the game to love.

Costa took the set in the next game, and broke again in the fifth game of the second set, before coasting to victory over the only qualifier ever to reach the final of the Barcelona tournament.

"I was rather nervous in the first set, but I won the points at the key moments," said Costa. "After the break in the second set I saw victory much closer."



Spain's Alberto Costa celebrates after scoring the winning point against compatriot Albert Portas at the end of the Barcelona Open Tennis tournament final. Costa beat Portas 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 to win the tournament (Reuters photo)

#### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
A TARIK HUSSEIN  
Grand Tourney Series, Jordan

#### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. 5 ♠ void ♣ Q 10 7 6 3 ♠ A J 5 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass  
4♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?

A. - Diamonds is the agreed trump suit, and four hearts is a cue-bid. Therefore, we would cue-bid four spades now. (Partner should not take it as natural; we could have supported spades on the previous round.) A practical alternative is a jump to six diamonds.

Q. 2 - North-South vulnerable. South deals.

A. Q J ♠ A 2 ♣ Q J 8 6 4 2 ♠ K Q 7  
The bidding has proceeded:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass  
2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?

A. - This depends on your methods. If you play that a new suit here asks for a stopper, bid two spades to inquire about North's holding in that suit. If not, three clubs is the logical action.

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

A. A E Q 10 ♠ A J 6 5 2 ♣ 9 5 4 3  
The bidding has proceeded:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass  
2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?

A. - Those 100 honors in spades are enticing, but don't let them interfere with the orderly description of your holding. It is important to tell partner that your hearts are five cards long, so rebid three hearts. Should that not be forcing in your methods, jump to four

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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**PHILADELPHIA "2"**

Demi Moore..... in

**STRIPTease**

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CINEMA TEL:699238  
**PLAZA**

Eddie Murphy ....in  
**METRO**

**THE HUNCHBACK OF  
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Show: 5:00 p.m.

CINEMA TEL:677420  
**CONCORD**

CONCORD "1"  
Steven Segal...in  
**GLIMMER MAN**

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Michael Jordan...in  
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## Group 3 World Cup qualifiers UAE beat Bahrain 3-0, await match against Jordan

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) Tuesday scored a 3-0 win over Bahrain in the second leg/first round Asian Group 3 World Cup qualifying matches in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

While Bahrain dropped out of the race for qualification, the win gave the UAE the group lead for now before the crucial match against Jordan Saturday when the group qualifier will be decided.

The UAE will automatically clinch the only qualifying berth from Group 3 if they beat Jordan. Even a draw against the Kingdom's team will be enough for the UAE to qualify.

However, set of complicated possibilities arise in the case of Jordan's win and by the number of goals scored since in the case of Jordan's win the two teams will tie in overall points and the goal difference will determine the winner.

Jordan is now second in the group after their 4-1 win over Bahrain which kept alive the King-

dom's qualifying chances after a dismal first leg showing in Manama, Bahrain where Jordan drew 0-0 with the UAE who beat Bahrain 2-1. Bahrain had then defeated Jordan 1-0.

The Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) had evaluated the Kingdom's results and described as satisfactory their goalless draw with the UAE in the opening match — a good result against a 1990 World Cup qualifier and currently Asia's second ranked team.

Onlookers had criticised the team for not being able to score in both their matches.

Even in eight friendly internationals in preparation for the qualifiers, Jordan could only score 6 goals altogether. Jordan's record included three defeats, three goalless draws and two wins.

The Kingdom's only wins were 2-0 and 4-1 in Muscat.

Jordan had two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 and drawing 0-0.

In matches against Iraq, Jordan twice lost 1-0 while both matches against Syria ended in goalless draws.

This is the fourth time Jordan plays in World Cup qualifying matches after taking part in first round qualifiers for Mexico 96, Italy 90, and USA 94.

Thirty-six Asian countries are contesting the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round, to be held in Singapore, where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

JTV coverage of  
Group 3 matches  
UAE — Jordan April 26 6:30 p.m.

### GROUP 3 STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	D	GF	GA	Pts
UAE	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Jordan	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Bahrain	4	1	3	0	3	9	3

## Cubs beat Mets again; Phillies rout Pirates

NEW YORK (R) — Scott Servais drove in three runs for the Chicago Cubs who took advantage of three New York Mets' errors on Monday to win 6-4 for their second straight victory after losing 14 in a row.

Frank Castillo allowed four runs and four hits with two walks and three strikeouts in six innings for the victory.

"We got a couple of extra outs," Cubs manager Jim Riggleman said. "When the opposition makes errors, you have to take advantage. We are still in a slump hitting."

The Cubs cruised to a 3-0 lead on Servais' two-run double in the fourth inning and his run-scoring single in the sixth.

"It takes a lot of pressure off losing," Servais said. "But we've got to get some of our boppers going. This is the best he's thrown. Our bullpen came in and did a nice job."

But it appeared as if Chicago would blow yet another game in the bottom of the sixth when the Mets exploded for four runs to take the lead.

In Pittsburgh, Curt Schilling became the first Philadelphia pitcher to go the distance this season and was backed by a three-run homer by Mike Lieberthal as the Phillies routed the Pittsburgh Pirates 10-2.

Schilling scattered nine hits — one to each of the Pittsburgh starters. He

struck out eight and did not walk a batter in winning his first game at three rivers stadium.

The Phillies did all their scoring in the first and last innings. They jumped on Steve Cooke (1-3) for four runs in the first and broke the game open with six more in the ninth.

"When they score those runs you have to get them out right away and protect those runs," Schilling said. "It is a jump start and a good kind of pressure."

### Yankees rally to beat White Sox

Cecil Fielder's two-out double in the eighth scored Pat Kelly with the go-ahead run as the New York Yankees came from behind to defeat the Chicago White Sox 4-3 Monday.

Paul O'Neill hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to tie the game for the Yankees, who took three of the four games in the series.

David Cone (1-2) survived a bout with wildness to earn the win. Cone allowed a career-high eight walks — one intentional — in seven innings. He allowed all three runs and seven hits and struck out eight.

Chris Hammond retired a pair of batters and was charged with a run and Jim Corsi also got a pair of outs before Heathcliff Slocumb pitched the ninth for his



Chicago Cubs second baseman Rey Sanchez can't get the throw away in time as he forces out New York Mets runner Todd Hundley in the sixth inning at Shea Stadium in New York. Batter Carl Everett was safe at first base. Cubs won 6-4 (Reuters photo)

the final two outs of the seventh.

In Seattle, Ken Griffey Jr. Had a two-run triple and scored the go-ahead run in a three-run seventh inning as the Seattle Mariners defeated the Kansas City Royals 6-5 for their ninth win in 12 games.

Tony Clark and Deivi Cruz added RBI in the pivotal ninth for the Tigers, who rallied from a 5-1 deficit.

A.J. Sager (2-1) notched the victory despite surrendering two runs — one earned — before getting

outs for his sixth save.

Jeff King hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning for Kansas City, extending his hitting streak to 11 games.

In Anaheim, Darin Erstad drove home the winning run on a chopper to second base in the bottom of the 13th inning as the Anaheim Angels defeated the Toronto Blue Jays 5-4.

Rich Delucia (1-0) notched the win with 1 1/3 strong innings of relief. He allowed no hits and struck out three.

## NBA rivals see Chicago as vulnera-Bull

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Last year they were unstoppable-Bull, winning a record 72 games and taking 14 of their first 15 playoff starts to look invincible-Bull.

But the juggernaut run of the Chicago Bulls might not be repeated-Bull this year and top National Basketball Association rivals even suggest that Michael Jordan and company might be vulnera-Bull.

"I don't think the gap is as great as last year," Atlanta coach Lenny Wilkens said. "Chicago is the champion. Give them the respect their due. You can compete with them, though. The gap is more experience than anything."

Injuries to NBA rebounding champion Dennis Rodman and top reserve Toni Kukoc plus improvements by top rivals have removed some of the aura from Chicago despite a 69-13 season, second-best in NBA history.

Make no mistake. The Bulls are favoured to capture their fifth NBA crown in seven years. But they coasted home this year, losing three of their final four regular season games rather than trying to match their all-time record.

"We folded under the intensity at the end of the schedule," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said. "We had to play six games in eight days and it took its toll. We were trying not to burn ourselves out."

"We knew we had to save something at the end of the season. We will step it up during the playoffs. This team has the ability to reach another level. We know this could be the last time people see this team together."

Jackson, Rodman and Jordan are all one-year contracts and Scottie Pippen's pact expires after next season. Victory this year could prompt a three-year bid next year. A playoff loss could see the Bulls broken up.

"Are we vulnerable? I don't know," Jackson said. "We had injuries last year. We survived that and came into the playoffs ready to play. In the playoffs we're

### STANDINGS EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct Gb
Y-Miami	61	21	.744 -
X-New York	57	25	.695 4
X-Orlando	45	37	.549 16
X-Washington	44	38	.537 17
New Jersey	56	31	.643 3
Philadelphia	22	60	.268 39
Boston	15	67	.183 46

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct Gb
YZ-Chicago	69	13	.841 -
X-Atlanta	56	26	.683 13
X-Detroit	54	28	.659 15
X-Charlotte	54	28	.659 15
Cleveland	42	40	.512 27
Indiana	39	43	.475 30
Milwaukee	33	49	.402 36
Toronto	30	52	.366 39

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division			
	W	L	Pct Gb
YZ-Utah	64	18	.780 -
X-Houston	57	25	.695 7
X-Minnesota	40	42	.488 24
Dallas	24	58	.293 40
Denver	21	61	.256 43
San Antonio	20	62	.244 44
Vancouver	14	68	.171 50

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct Gb
Y-Seattle	57	25	.695 -
X-LA Lakers	56	26	.683 1
X-Portland	49	33	.598 8
X-Phoenix	40	42	.488 17
X-LA Clippers	36	46	.439 21
Sacramento	34	48	.415 23
Golden State	30	52	.366 27

X — Clinched Playoff Berth  
Y — Clinched Division Title  
Z — Clinched Conference Title

extremely fine tuned. We have to stand on our history."

Jordan won a record ninth NBA scoring crown but his 29.7-point average was the lowest of his title totals. Rodman won the rebound crown with 16 a game but missed 27 games due to injuries and suspensions.

"The possibility is they could be had in a game or two somewhere along the

way, because they are simply a little more vulnerable because they've had health problems," Miami coach Pat Riley said.

"They started to lose games when they were hurt. If they had kept their health, they'd have won 70 again. Losing Kukoc and Rodman for long stretches overloaded the other guys."

### JORDAN TIMES

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Email: [chil@amman.com](mailto:chil@amman.com)

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#### JOB Profile

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## Central Bank drafts aggressive regulations to attract investors and hard currency into Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) on Tuesday finalised draft regulations on foreign exchange, set to ease restrictions on investments in foreign currency, free payments and remove obstructions imposed on transactions.

The new draft regulations no longer restrict foreign currency transfers to and from the Kingdom. The regulations also provide for the payment of foreign currency transfers to their consignees in either Jordanian dinar or foreign currency.

Under the regulations licensed banks shall be allowed to outflow Jordanian currency and gold, foreign currency and gold, and other foreign payment methods deposited in their accounts.

Under the new draft regulations licensed banks shall be allowed to open accounts in foreign currencies with correspondent banks abroad and are obliged to supply the CBJ with the names of these banks.

Licensed banks may keep up to 15 per cent of their foreign liabilities in return for

foreign exchange inflow into the country, surplus liabilities should be sold to other licensed banks in the kingdom or to the CBJ within one week in accordance with the new regulations.

The new regulations also allow licensed banks to run investment portfolios and joint investment funds in foreign currency and to trade with foreign currency on behalf of their clients on the basis of profit margins and exchange of assets in accordance with the current laws and related CBJ notes.

Licensed banks shall also be allowed to conduct delayed purchases of unlimited foreign currency from their clients against the rate of the Jordanian dinar provided that such transactions are made to cover prices of imports into the Kingdom, according to the new regulations.

They shall also be entitled to open accounts in Jordanian dinar and foreign currency for non-residents

provided they produce a certificate proving the client is, nonresident in Jordan. Withdrawal and transfer of amounts of nonresident's accounts is not restricted.

The new regulations stipulate any natural person residing in the kingdom shall be entitled to open accounts at Jordanian banks in foreign currency of unlimited amounts.

Legal persons residing in Jordan shall be entitled to open accounts in foreign currency at licensed Jordanian banks provided the total amount and its interests not exceed the equivalent of one million Jordanian dinars at any given time, amounts in excess of JD 1 million should be sold to licensed banks or to the CBJ.

Unrestricted withdrawals and transfers in foreign currency from resident accounts shall be allowed to cover their current expenses.

They also allowed the export of raw gold from the Kingdom provided payments be reimbursed to Jordan through licensed banks.

They also allowed the

import of all types gold in all its forms to the Kingdom as well as freedom of movement of gold out of the Kingdom. Moreover, it allowed the removal of gold equivalent to the foreign currency deposited in Jordan.

According to the Director General of the Investment Bank, Issam Salfiti, freeing restrictions on foreign currency would encourage foreign investors to invest in the Kingdom. "The new regulations will attract foreign investors to the Kingdom and will reassure them that they can sell their investments any time they want with no restrictions," commented Mr. Salfiti.

Deputy Director General of the Housing Bank, Abdul Qader Dweik, said the new regulations would increase the flow of foreign currency into the Kingdom and restore Jordanians' confidence in their currency. "The new regulations will positively be reflected in the capital market and will increase the inflow of foreign currency into the Kingdom," said Mr. Dweik.

## Crown Prince briefs Pakistani delegation on peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday called for doubling efforts aimed at overcoming obstacles that impede the Middle East peace process so that comprehensive and just peace can be established to benefit all peoples of this region.

Speaking at a meeting with a visiting military delegation from the Pakistani Defence College Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's full support for the Palestinian people in their quest to establish their independent state on their national soil and in exercising their legitimate rights.

At the meeting attended by Pakistan's ambassador to Jordan, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, the assistant chairman of the joint chiefs-of-staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces for intelligence

affairs, Prince Hassan described the Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem as illegitimate, pointing to the danger which these settlements would cause to a just Middle East peace.

Stressing the need for building a comprehensive security in all its social, economic and humanitarian dimensions, Prince Hassan emphasised the need for regional cooperation in dealing with issues of common concern.

In his remarks, Prince Hassan referred to the contributions of the Jordanian Armed Forces and the Pakistani Armed Forces to the U.N. peace keeping forces and called for promoting Jordanian-Pakistani cooperation by maintaining a strategic dialogue.

Speaking at the meeting, the head of the Pakistani delegation expressed Pakistan's appreciation of and support for Jordan's stand and its concern over promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai, chairman to the joint chiefs-of-staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces, received at his office the Pakistani delegation which is led by Major General Mohammad Anwar Khan and reviewed the general situation in the region, and Jordanian-Pakistani coordination as well as issues of common concern.

The Pakistani delegation heard a briefing on the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces in the presence of senior armed forces staff officers.

## Turkish President Demirel urges early general election

ANKARA (AFP) — President Suleiman Demirel on Tuesday called for early general elections, saying only a fresh legislative vote could bring Turkey out of a row between the Islamist-led government and the pro-secular military.

"The key to a settlement for the current rifts is an early general election," Mr. Demirel told the private television channel Show TV in an interview early Tuesday.

"Unless there is a fresh parliamentary election, the rows and tensions are due to continue," Mr. Demirel said. "The solution is through polls."

But Mr. Demirel complained that he, as president, did not have constitutional powers to announce new elections and said he did not know if the Islamist and conservative-led coalition controlling the current parliament would seek a fresh nationwide vote.

Mr. Demirel also called for reconcilia-

tion between Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's government and the powerful military, which sees itself as the guardian of modern Turkey's secular heritage. The two are involved in a bitter row over the country's creeping Islamisation.

"Those disguised under Islam should never dare to try to change the basics of Turkey's system," Mr. Demirel said, adding, "also the related ones should refrain from hurting the army."

"And the others should not hurt the feelings of the true Muslims who make up 99 per cent of this country's population," he added.

Mr. Demirel also said a potential military coup would destroy Turkey's democracy, saying, "you cannot save the democracy by destroying it first."

The government-army rift has raised public fears of a coup by the army, although top military commanders have ruled out such a possibility. The army

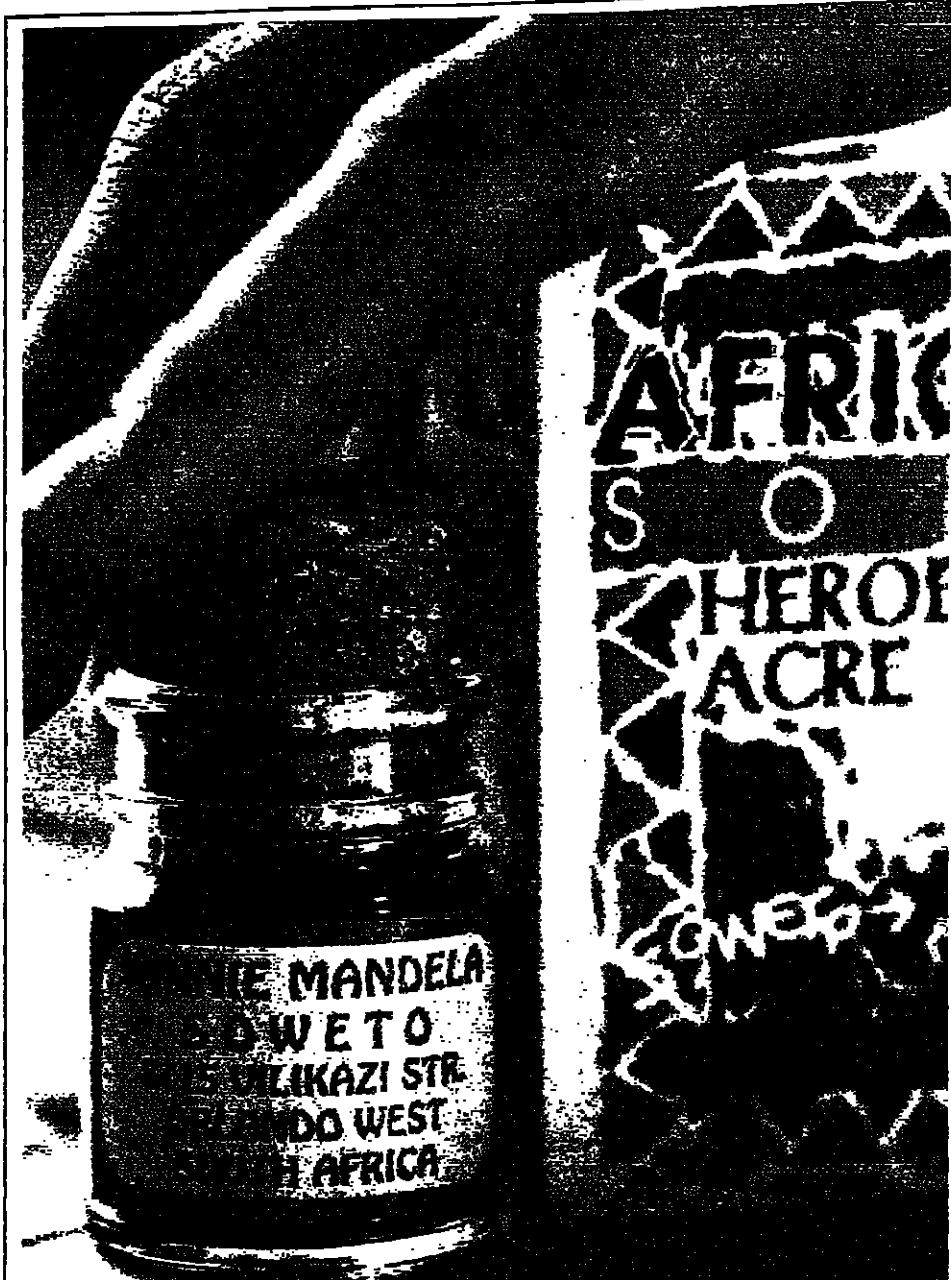
has staged three coups in Turkey's recent history with the pretext of preventing the state's destruction.

Tensions once more escalated last week as the commander of the military police in eastern Turkey warned the Islamist-led government against any attempt to undermine the secular system.

"By exploiting democracy, the Islamists are attempting to seize power through repression, even by cutting off heads as in the case of Algeria," General Osman Ozbek told a public meeting in the eastern town of Artvin last Friday.

This latest upsurge in Turkey comes ahead of the monthly meeting of the National Security Council (MGK), Turkey's highest advisory body, which will take place on Sunday.

The military-dominated MGK in February urged the government to implement a plan for a crackdown on pro-Islamist radicals.



WINNIE NEEDS THE MONEY: Soil from the former home of South African President Nelson Mandela is on sale by his ex-wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, at the house they once shared. Tourists will have to pay \$12 a bottle to claim their piece of history. The house is one of many 'struggle sites' that form part of a thriving tourist industry in Soweto, east of Johannesburg (Reuters photo)

## SPLA says Sudanese peace accords a sham; war still on

NAIROBI, Khartoum (AFP) — A Sudanese former rebel has claimed that a deal cut with the military regime in Khartoum can bring peace to southern Sudan despite the failure to sign by mainstream guerrilla leader John Garang.

Kerbino Kuanyen, leader of a breakaway group from Colonel Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), said the peace pact signed on Monday will meet "all aspirations of the south Sudanese people," the official Al Sudan Al Hadith daily reported Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha said that the accord signed with seven rebel factions was open to all, including Colonel Garang, who has fought since 1983 to end the Islamist north's domination of the mainly animist and Christian south.

The accord with six of the factions, splinter groups from the SPLA, provided for a referendum on self-determination in the south after four years. No details were given on the second agreement with a faction from the Nuba Mountains, also an SPLA offshoot.

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, who seized power in a coup in 1989, also announced an amnesty from Monday for members of the factions who had committed crimes fighting Sudanese government troops.

The agreement stipulated that Islam is the basis of the law in Sudan, although federal states could have "special" laws, and Arabic is the main language ahead of English.

The SPLA recently launched a new offensive in the mainly Christian and animist south, capturing a string of towns from government troops.

Riek Machar signed the agreement for his South Sudan Independence

Movement (SSIM). Kerbino Kuanyen Bol for the Bahrel Ghazal group of the SPLA. Arok Thon Arok for the Bor group. Topolos Ochang for the Equatoria Defence Force. Kuaj Mekwai for the Independent Movement and Samuel Aro for United Sudanese African Parties.

Mr. Kwaje said SPLA forces captured the town of Wunrock, a stronghold of Kerbino Kuanyen's fighters in Bahr Al Ghazal state, on Monday, inflicting heavy casualties on his fighters and on government troops.

Rebels also overrun Togan town in the eastern Kassala state on Monday, Mr. Kwaje added.

In the Eritrean capital Asmara, an official in the Sudanese opposition Umma Party said Tuesday that rebels had taken 3,000 prisoners in government ranks at Yei in south Sudan on March 11.

Umma Communications chief, Ali Ibrahim Ali, added that these men had been persuaded by the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), of which both Umma and the SPLA are part, to rally for rebel ranks.

He also said that the Umma Party of former Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi, who was ousted in General Bashir's coup, had held a secret conference in Cairo on April 18 and 19, but taken part in no discussions with the Khartoum regime.

A spokesman for another party in the NDA, the alliance forces, on Tuesday dismissed the Khartoum peace pact, saying that some of the factions concerned had long fought alongside government troops, while others had not even been heard of

missed as a sham peace agreements signed between Khartoum's military regime and seven other minor rebel factions.

"We believe the agreements are a sham. These factions have been collaborating with the government since 1991 and the agreement only formalises that cooperation," Samson Kwaje, spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Nairobi, told AFP.

"The agreements are mechanisms of formally absorbing those factions into the Sudanese army. They will not stop the war," Mr. Kwaje added.

The accords, signed on Monday, between the government and six of the factions, splinter groups from the SPLA, provided for a referendum on self-determination in the south after four years.

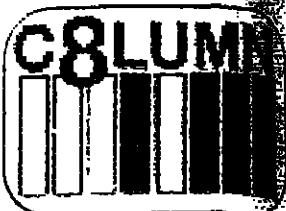
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Riek Machar signed the agreement for his South Sudan Independence



Mexican prisoners use conjugal visits to dig tunnel

GUADALAJARA (R) — Authorities in Ciudad Guzman in Jalisco state said they discovered some of their 70 prisoners were using conjugal visits to try and dig their way out of jail. "It was in the area of conjugal visits," Alfonso Ramirez, secretary of the city government, told Reuters. "There was a small refrigerator and they were digging underneath that, but they had only gone about two metres down." "They were scratching up against a retaining wall shared by a bank," Ramirez said. "So we suppose that they were trying to go to the bank."

Canadian boy admits cyber terrorism of his family

ONTARIO (R) — A 15-year-old Canadian boy has admitted he was responsible for months of notorious high-tech pranks that terrorised his own family, police said. The boy identified himself as the stalker, they said. Debbie Tamai, mother of the son the media dubbed "Cyber Punk," on Sunday apologised for Billy's actions in a statement. Since January, authorities have been hunting for "Sommy" — the name adopted by the boy who tapped into the Tamai family's telephone and electrical systems. Police said he disguised his voice electronically and cut into phone conversations by simply using an extension in his bedroom. He had eluded two full-time officers and as many as eight policemen assigned to the case.

Colombian tree-planting one for the record books

BOGOTA (R) — More than 10,000 trees were planted in a single minute on a hill overlooking Colombia's south-western city of Cali in a ceremony that should win a place in the record books. Bogota's El Espectador newspaper said a total of 10,720 trees were planted on the hill, previously adorned only with three austere crosses, during Sunday's ceremony organised by a local ecological group. "It was the world's biggest planting in a minute," the newspaper said, adding that Guinness Book of Records was sure to record the event.

Russian firm wins order to fly elephants to Africa

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian airline has won an order to export elephants to Uganda later this year. Marina Samokhvalova, cargo manager of Transcharter also said the firm had been chosen by British-based Aircraft Management Services to transport four to six elephants from the St. Petersburg zoo to the Ugandan capital Kampala. She said the elephants would be used in the making of a BBC documentary film. She did not say why the BBC had decided to send elephants from Russia to an African country. The elephants will be transported in containers on an Antonov AN-124 jet in September, she said.

## Turkish army dominates Kurdish rebels, but civilians pay the price

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AFP) — The Turkish army seems to have gained the upper hand in its war against Kurdish rebels, but local civilians are paying a heavy price for the bitter conflict.

Hundreds of thousands of them expelled by the military from their villages in southeast Anatolia are living in total misery in this regional capital.

The population of the city has swelled from 380,000 in 1990 to 1.5 million today, and the infrastructure has proved completely inadequate to cope with the influx.

Forced to abandon their livestock, their houses and their fields, the villagers live in deplorable shanty-towns with no facilities, or crammed into apartments in the poorer districts.

They suffer from unemployment, malnutrition and disease. Turks were shocked earlier

this year when they saw on television dozens of women and children fighting in the mud for a few sacks of flour, donated by a local businessman and thrown from a truck.

Diyarbakir Mayor Ahmet Belgin, estimating that half the population lived below the poverty line, said the situation was a threat to social order.

A third of the region's 9,000 villages and hamlets were emptied or destroyed by the security forces in operations designed to deprive the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) of support.

Villages that were spared were generally those that agreed to form pro-government militia against the PKK, which is seeking a separatist state in the majority Kurdish region.

Human rights groups heavily criticised the tactics of a war which has killed more than

23,000 civilians, soldiers and PKK guerrillas in 13 years.

Felemez, a father-of-eight from the province of Lice now living in a Diyarbakir shanty-town divided by muddy streets and an open sewer, was expelled from his village in 1995.

Felemez said that in any case he could not return to his home without state aid. "I have no livestock, no house and no electricity," he said.

The money he got from selling his livestock before the village was destroyed by the army is now exhausted and he has no job. "I just don't know what to do," he said. "I cannot carry on."

Seyfemin Kizilkan, head of the chamber of Diyarbakir's doctors, said diseases linked to poverty were rife among the displaced people.

Cases of typhoid have been noted in 45 per cent of families, while the rate of cholera and dysentery is around 30 per cent. Unemployment stands at 67 per cent, and the average annual income per head is \$304, an opinion poll showed.

The army, meanwhile, claims to have the PKK under control, without succeeding in ending the rebellion completely.

Necati Bilican, the overall coordinator of the struggle against the rebellion, said the guerrillas had lost their strength and their influence among the population, although they still had the support of "a small minority."

They had been reduced to hiding in small groups in the woods and mountains, launching lightning raids from time to time, and many had moved across the border into Kurdish-populated northern Iraq, Mr. Bilican

said. Kurdish officials and journalists based in Diyarbakir confirmed that the army had the upper hand, adding that the population had become tired of the war.

Abdullah Akin, head of the local branch of the pro-Kurd People's Democracy Party, denied that the PKK had lost its strength, but he admitted that most clashes nowadays were prompted by army operations against the rebels.

While such operations continue, the residents of Diyarbakir's slums have little prospect of going back home.

A repopulation project launched a few months ago seems unrealistic, with some 160 villages and hamlets reoccupied so far. "Security considerations" means that this number will no more than double in the near future, officials said.